

The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in its Historical and Social Context

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H.N. Roskam



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ABBREVIATIONS

1. PRIMARY SOURCES

a. *Old Testament*

Am	Amos	Mal	Malachi
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	Mic	Micah
Dan	Daniel	Neh	Nehemiah
Ex	Exodus	Num	Numbers
Ezek	Ezekiel	Ps	Psalms
Ezra	Ezra	1 Sam	1 Samuel
Isa	Isaiah	2 Sam	2 Samuel
Jer	Jeremiah	Zech	Zechariah
Lev	Leviticus		

b. *Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books and Pseudepigrapha*

2 Baruch	2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch	2 Macc	2 Maccabees
1 En	1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch	Ps Sal	Psalms of Solomon
		Sir	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
1 Macc	1 Maccabees	Wis	Wisdom

c. *New Testament*

Acts	Acts of the Apostles	Mt	Matthew
Col	Colossians	1 Pet	1 Peter
1 Cor	1 Corinthians	Phil	Philippians
2 Cor	2 Corinthians	Philem	Philemon
Heb	Hebrews	Rom	Romans
Jn	John	1 Thess	1 Thessalonians
1 Jn	1 John	2 Thess	2 Thessalonians
Lk	Luke	1 Tim	1 Timothy
Mk	Mark		

d. *Josephus*

B.J.	<i>De bello judaico</i>	Ant.	<i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
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2. REFERENCE WORKS

ABD	D.N. Freedman, G.A. Herion, D.F. Graf, J.D. Pleins, A.B. Beck (edd.), <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> I-VI, New York/London, 1992.
ANRW	W. Haase, H. Temporini (edd.), <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> , Berlin/New York, 1972-1997.
Bauer	W. Bauer, <i>Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur</i> (revised by K. Aland, B. Aland), Berlin/New York, 1988 ⁶ .
LSJ	H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, R. McKenzie, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , Oxford, 1940 ⁹ , with a Supplement, 1968 (reprint 1990).
LThK	W. Kasper, K. Baugartner, et al. (edd.), <i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i> I-XI, Freiburg/Basel, 1993-2001 ³ .
Nestle-Aland	K. Aland, B. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C.M. Martini, B.M. Metzger (edd.), <i>Novum Testamentum graece. 27 revidierte Auflage</i> , Stuttgart, 2001 ⁸ .
NRSV	B.M. Metzger, et al. (edd.), <i>The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testament with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books. New Revised Standard Version</i> , New York/Oxford, 1989.
RGG ³	H. von Campenhausen, K. Galling (edd.), <i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft. Dritte Auflage</i> I-VII, Tübingen, 1957-1965.
RGG ⁴	H.D. Betz, J. Persch (edd.), <i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft. Vierte Auflage</i> I-IV, Tübingen, 1998-2001.
ThDNT	G. Kittel (ed.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> I-X (transl. G.W. Bromley), Grand Rapids, 1964-1976.
TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae CD ROM#D. Packard Humanities Institute. University of California. Compilation ©1992.
Wordsworth-White	J. Wordsworth, H.J. White (edd.), <i>Novum Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi Latine secundum editionem Sancti Hieronymi</i> I-III, Oxford, 1889-1954.

3. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

AB	The Anchor Bible
ASP	American Studies in Papyrology
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBM	Baker Biblical Monograph
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BSGRT	Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum teubneriana
BZNW	Beihefte zur <i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
CBM	Chester Beatty Monographs
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DJSS	Duke Judaic Studies Series
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
EB	Études bibliques
EF	Erträge der Forschung
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FzB	Forschung zur Bibel
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
GthA	Göttinger theologische Arbeiten
GTW	Grundriss der theologischen Wissenschaft
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
IRT	Issues in Religion and Theology
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
KTVÜ	Kleine Texte für theologische und philologische Vorlesungen und Übungen
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio divina
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
NEB	Die neue Echter Bibel

XIV

ABBREVIATIONS

NSC	New Surveys in the Classics
NT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTG	New Testament Guides
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et orbis antiquus
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PGC	The Pelican Gospel Commentaries
PVTG	Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti graece
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBL	<i>Society of Biblical Literature</i>
SBL DS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBL MS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SFEG	Schriften der finnischen exegetischen Gesellschaft
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJTh	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SKDQ	Sammlung ausgewählter kirchen- und dogmengeschichtlicher Quellenschriften
SNTS MS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SPB	Studia post-biblica
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
THNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
ThW	Theologische Wissenschaft
ThZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UT	Urban Taschenbücher
UTB	Uni Taschenbücher
VF	<i>Verkündigung und Forschung</i>
WBC	World Biblical Commentary
WThJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WuD	<i>Wort und Dienst</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

4. GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS

AD	<i>Anno Domini</i>	col(s).	column(s)
art.	article (in encyclopedia)	ed(d).	editor(s)
BC	before Christ	e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (for example)
ca.	<i>circa</i>		
cf.	<i>confer</i> (compare)	esp.	especially

ABBREVIATIONS

XV

<i>et al.</i>	<i>et alii</i> (and others)	s.v.	<i>sub voce</i> (under the word)
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> (and so on)		
FS	Festschrift	transl.	translated by
i.e.	<i>id est</i> (that is to say)	v.l.	<i>varia lectio</i> (alternative reading)
LXX	Septuagint		
ms(s).	manuscript(s)	v(v).	verse(s)
p(p).	page(s)	vol(s).	volume(s)
par(r).	parallel(s)	[]	my addition to, or clarification of, a quotation

INTRODUCTION

Mark's Gospel is the oldest Gospel preserved, and is generally held to have been the first written account of Jesus' life of some length. It cannot be proven, of course, that no one prior to Mark had produced a similar writing, but it seems unlikely. In any case, we do not know of any of such text, and Mark's work can be explained adequately without supposing that he made use of an earlier writing of the same kind.

In composing his Gospel Mark undoubtedly used traditional material. Some sayings in the Gospel, for instance, have clear parallels in Q, the source generally believed to have been used by the authors of the Gospels according to Luke and Matthew. This indicates that these sayings were part of the pre-Markan Christian tradition. Certain stories in the Gospel also probably did not originate with Mark, but circulated within the Christian community. It is likely that Mark knew at least some of these traditional stories or sayings of Jesus as part of larger units or collections. There is, however, no indication that the evangelist had come across a coherent, written account of Jesus' life.

In other words, Mark's Gospel seems to have been written without an obvious model at a time when writing an account of Jesus' life was not a common thing to do. This observation makes one curious about what motivated the evangelist. Why did Mark decide to write a story about Jesus' life? What was the immediate cause? And what was the evangelist's objective in writing? It is the aim of the present study to formulate an answer to these questions concerning the origin and purpose of Mark's Gospel.

1. THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF MARK'S GOSPEL IN NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP

a. *The So-Called 'Traditional' View on the Origin and Purpose of Mark's Gospel*

For a very long period in history, there seems to have been a consensus about the purpose of Mark's Gospel. Despite differences in method, interpretation, or interest, theologians up to the nineteenth century generally assumed—consciously or unconsciously—that Mark's Gospel was an attempt to give a historical, biographical account of the events that took place during Jesus' life.

For centuries, however, Mark's Gospel was considered to be historically less reliable than the other canonical Gospels, and as a result it received little attention. This relative neglect was brought to an end by the developments in the study of the Gospels during the nineteenth century. The interest in, and search for, knowledge about the historical Jesus led to the rise of the historical-critical approach to the Gospels (1774-1825)¹ and to the awareness that, in fact, none of the canonical Gospels is a completely reliable description of Jesus' life. At the same time, the discovery of Markan priority caused Mark's Gospel to be proclaimed the most reliable and important source for historical knowledge about Jesus. Thus by the second half of the nineteenth century, Mark's Gospel had become the centre of scholarly interest, and formed the basis of the many reconstructions of Jesus' life that were written at the time.

It was in this period, roughly the second half of the nineteenth century, that the so-called 'traditional' view of Mark's Gospel took shape.² In accordance with the traditions of the early Church, Mark's

¹ For the rise of the historical-critical method in the interpretation of the Gospels, see W.G. Kümmel, *Das Neue Testament. Geschichte der Erforschung seiner Probleme*, Freiburg/München, 1970², pp. 88-143; R. Schäfer, *Die Bibelauslegung in der Geschichte der Kirche*, Gütersloh, 1980, pp. 124-136; M.H. de Lang, *De opkomst van de historische en literaire kritiek in de synoptische beschouwing van de evangeliën van Calvijn (1555) tot Griesbach (1774)*, Leiden, 1993, pp. 259-288.

² In fact this view, in a modern shape, has had its defenders until recent times and even until today. See, e.g., V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark. The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes*, London, 1966², esp. pp. 26-32; C.H. Dodd, *The Founder of*

Gospel was thought to be written in Rome shortly after the death of the apostle Peter in the sixties of the first century AD.³ It was assumed to be a relatively faithful account of Jesus' ministry based on Peter's recollections. Mark's interest in writing was presumed to have been historical and biographical, and his main objective to preserve the traditions about the historical Jesus.

b. *The Form-Critical View on Mark's Gospel*

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, the so-called 'traditional' view on Mark's Gospel gradually became less popular among New Testament scholars.

Right at the beginning of the century, the idea that Mark's Gospel was a fairly reliable account of Jesus' ministry was seriously challenged by William Wrede's book *Das Messiasgeheimnis*, published in 1901.⁴ Wrede argues that the secrecy motif in Mark's Gospel, which had played a part in the scholarly discussion about the messianic conscience of the historical Jesus, is in fact a literary, theological motif which arose among the first-century Christians. Wrede's conclusions imply that the evangelist's interest was theological rather than historical.

Wrede's theory was accepted enthusiastically by, among others, Johannes Weiss. In his work *Das älteste Evangelium*, published in 1903,⁵ Weiss intended to argue for the whole of Mark's Gospel what Wrede had shown only for the secrecy motif, i.e. that Mark's relig-

Christianity, London, 1971, esp. pp. 24-36; E. Best, *Mark. The Gospel as Story*, Edinburgh, 1983, esp. pp. 21-36 and 93; M. Hengel, 'Probleme des Markusevangeliums,' in P. Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien. Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982* (WUNT 28), Tübingen, 1983, pp. 221-265; idem, 'Entstehungszeit und Situation des Markusevangeliums,' in H. Cancik (ed.), *Markus-Philologie. Historische, literargeschichtliche und stilistische Untersuchungen zum zweiten Evangelium* (WUNT 33), Tübingen, 1984, pp. 1-45; idem, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (transl. J. Bowden), Philadelphia, 1985, esp. pp. 1-30 and 47-53; idem, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ. An Investigation of the Collection and Origin of the Canonical Gospels* (transl. J. Bowden), Harrisburg, 2000, esp. pp. 78-96; B. Orchard, 'Mark and the Fusion of Traditions,' in F. Van Segbroeck, et al. (edd.), *The Four Gospels 1992* (FS F. Neirynck) II (BETL 100B), Leuven, 1992, pp. 779-800.

³ This tradition goes back to Irenaeus (compare, however, p. 3 note 3) and Clement of Alexandria. Their testimonies will be discussed briefly in Chapter 2.

⁴ W. Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien. Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums*, Göttingen, 1901.

⁵ J. Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markus-Evangeliums und der ältesten evangelischen Überlieferung*, Göttingen, 1903.

ious ideas have had such a great influence on his image of Jesus' life that the evangelist should be considered a teacher rather than a biographer.⁶ Weiss states that Mark's Gospel is not a biography, since the evangelist has no interest in biographical information such as the ancestry, youth, or appearance of Jesus, nor does he pay much attention to the chronological order of the events he relates. Furthermore, Weiss argues, Mark is not an author in the ordinary sense of the word, nor is the Gospel a literary work in the usual meaning. Mark is rather a transmitter and redactor of traditions available to him. He aimed to compose a narrative that would guide and edify his readers, not a biography.

Thus, during the first decade of the twentieth century, the so-called 'traditional' view was pushed into the background. In the succeeding decades a new understanding of Mark's Gospel gained ground under the influence of the form-critics Martin Dibelius, Karl Ludwig Schmidt, and Rudolf Bultmann.⁷ Mark's Gospel was no longer considered a biographical account containing historically reliable information about Jesus' ministry, but a compilation of Christian traditions that had developed over decades and had been brought together into one book by a redactor. The Gospel was thought not to be the work of an individual author, but the product of a Christian community. The evangelist was believed to have been a mere compiler, and his artistic contribution, and therefore the literary value of the Gospel, to have been very limited. Mark's Gospel was considered a popular writing without analogies in classical literature, the first example of a new literary genre strictly proper to early Christianity.

The form-critical understanding of Mark's Gospel became widely accepted among New Testament scholars. For decades Mark was mainly seen as a compilation of traditional material brought together

⁶ J. Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium*, pp. 2-3.

⁷ M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, Tübingen, 1919; K.L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu. Literarkritische Untersuchungen zur ältesten Jesusüberlieferung*, Berlin, 1919; idem, 'Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte,' in H. Schmidt (ed.), *Eucharisterion. Studien zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* II, Göttingen, 1923, pp. 50-134; R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (FRLANT 29), Göttingen, 1921. See also, e.g., R. Bultmann, 'Die Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien,' in *Glauben und Verstehen. Gesammelte Aufsätze* IV, Tübingen, 1965, pp. 1-41, esp. pp. 36-41; idem, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Tübingen, 1965⁵, esp. pp. 88-89.

in a redactional framework. The form-critics were mainly interested in the individual pre-Markan units included in Mark's Gospel. As a result, they did not show much interest in questions concerning the overall composition of Mark, the evangelist's message and purpose in writing, or his theological motivation. The form-critics' view that Mark's Gospel was a unique product of Christianity also blinded them to questions concerning Mark's literary character.

c. The Origin and Purpose of Mark's Gospel from the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

After the Second World War, the scholarly perspective on Mark's Gospel gradually changed. Scholars became increasingly interested in the evangelist's motives for selecting and editing the traditions known to him, and his objectives in arranging, modifying, or altering the traditional stories as he did. The focus shifted from the traditional elements included in the Gospel to the redactional contribution of the evangelist.

This shift of focus in Markan scholarship is usually considered to be marked by the publication of Willi Marxsen's study *Der Evangelist Markus* in 1956.⁸ Marxsen argues that the evangelist adapted the traditions available to him in order to address the actual situation in which he and his readers were living. As a result, the Markan redactional elements in the Gospel form a basis for conclusions concerning the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospel, and offer a clue to Mark's authorial intentions and purpose in writing. Marxsen maintains that Mark wrote his Gospel in Galilee during the Jewish Revolt (66-70 AD), and that it was his intention to incite the Christians to gather in Galilee, where, in his view, the parousia was soon to take place.⁹

Similar in approach, but less often cited, are Samuel G.F. Brandon's chapters on Mark's Gospel in *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*, published in 1951, and *Jesus and the Zealots*,

⁸ W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus. Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Evangeliums* (FRLANT 67), Göttingen, 1956.

⁹ In W. Marxsen, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament. Eine Einführung in ihre Probleme*, Gütersloh, 1978⁴, pp. 139-149, the author modifies this conclusion concerning Mark's intentions. Here Marxsen maintains his conclusion that the evangelist's intentions were theological rather than historical, but defines the Gospel's purpose in a more general sense by saying that it was meant to incite the Christian community to follow Jesus.

published in 1967.¹⁰ Like Marxsen, Brandon takes as a premise that Mark selected and adapted the traditions available to him in order to address the actual situation of his readers. He differs from Marxsen, however, in maintaining that the book was written for gentile Christians in Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

According to Brandon, the obliteration of the Church of Jerusalem as the result of the Jewish Revolt had deprived the Roman Christians of the source of their tradition, and made it necessary for them to make an effort to preserve the traditions they possessed. For this reason, Mark undertook the composition of his Gospel. The evangelist also had an apologetic aim. The reports of the Jewish Revolt, and especially the triumphal processions of Vespasian and Titus in Rome, had inflamed the anti-Semitism already current in Graeco-Roman society. Since the Christian movement was of Jewish origin, Christians ran the risk of being regarded by their pagan neighbours and the Roman authorities as infected with Jewish revolutionary ideas, the more so because the Romans had executed their founder, Jesus, for sedition. Therefore, in writing his Gospel Mark intended to dissociate Jesus, and his followers, from the Jewish nationalism that had caused the revolt against the Romans in Palestine. In his depiction of Jesus' ministry, the evangelist thus aimed, in Brandon's view, to play down Roman involvement in the crucifixion of Jesus and to reassure the Roman Christians of Jesus' loyalty to Rome.

The scholarly discussion during the 1950s and 1960s, then, turned to the Gospel's theological perspective and overall purpose. The evangelist was no longer seen as a mere redactor, but almost universally considered a creative writer and theologian. Mark's Gospel was valued as an original work written by an author who used certain narrative techniques and had his own theological conceptions and authorial aims. Most of these aims were thought to be theological rather than historical. Of the numerous studies on Mark's Gospel that have been published since the 1960s a few will be discussed here in

¹⁰ S.G.F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church. A Study of the Effects of the Jewish Overthrow of A.D. 70 on Christianity*, London, 1951, pp. 185-205; idem, *Jesus and the Zealots. A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity*, Manchester, 1967, pp. 221-282. See also S.G.F. Brandon, 'The Date of the Markan Gospel,' *NTS* 7 (1961), pp. 126-141; idem, 'The Apologetic Factor in the Markan Gospel,' in F.L. Cross (ed.), *Studia Evangelica* II, Berlin, 1964, pp. 34-46; idem, *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth*, London, 1968, pp. 60-106.

greater detail, since they explicitly concentrate on the questions concerning the historical situation in which the Gospel originated, and its purpose.

A much debated theory with regard to these questions was proposed by Theodore J. Weeden (1968; 1971).¹¹ Weeden argues that the situation that caused the evangelist to write his Gospel was a christological dispute within the Markan community. According to Weeden, Mark's main objective was to contest a christological view he considered a heresy undermining the faith of his community. The adherents of this view considered Jesus a 'divine man' (θεῖος ἀνὴρ), meaning 'a superhuman being who possesses supernatural knowledge and wisdom, and performs miracles.' This christology entailed a concept of discipleship according to which the disciple had to prove himself worthy of the veneration of other Christians by being superior to them in supernatural power and spiritual experience. The adherents of this 'divine man'-christology claimed that their position went back to the disciples themselves. In his Gospel, Weeden maintains, Mark disputes this heretical view by creating a conflict between Jesus and his disciples. The disciples play the role of Mark's opponents and advocate a 'divine man'-christology. Mark's Jesus rejects their views and advocates Mark's own position, that is that Jesus is the suffering Messiah and that suffering is an inevitable consequence of following Jesus.

Another study that deserves mention here is Werner H. Kelber's *The Kingdom in Mark*, published in 1974.¹² According to Kelber, the motivational starting-point for Mark's Gospel was the Jewish Revolt of 66-70 AD, and in particular the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. Kelber assumes that, during the last years of the war, the Christian community in Jerusalem had harboured the eschatological conviction that the parousia was soon to take place in Jerusalem. The destruction of the temple had shattered these hopes, and led to a crisis for Christian faith, since the Kingdom of God had not come at the expected time and place. The evangelist Mark, who possibly lived in Galilee, created a new literary form to address this crisis.

¹¹ T.J. Weeden, 'The Heresy that Necessitated Mark's Gospel,' *ZNW* 59 (1968), pp. 145-158; idem, *Mark. Traditions in Conflict*, Philadelphia, 1971.

¹² W.H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark. A New Place and a New Time*, Philadelphia, 1974. See esp. pp. 129-147.

In his Gospel, Kelber posits, Mark intended to explain to his readers that the parousia was never meant to take place in Jerusalem, and that the idea that it would was due to a lack of understanding on the part of the disciples. In fact, the parousia was still to be expected and would take place in Galilee. Mark, then, on the one hand redefined the identity of the Jewish and gentile Christians of Galilee, whilst on the other hand appealing to the Judaeans who had survived the destruction of Jerusalem to join the Galilean community awaiting the Kingdom of God.

Especially noteworthy are Howard C. Kee's studies on Mark's Gospel in *Community of the New Age*, published in 1977.¹³ Kee argues that the question of the purpose of Mark's Gospel has clear social and cultural dimensions, and that therefore social and cultural-historical methods are to be employed in the study of Mark's Gospel. Insights into Mark's times and situation gained through the application of such methods lead, according to Kee, to a better understanding of Mark's intentions, since the evangelist reworked the traditions available to him in order to address the needs of his community. Kee then reached the following conclusions concerning the purpose of Mark's Gospel.

The Markan community, in Kee's hypothesis, is to be situated in a rural area interspersed with small towns, probably southern Syria, in the years immediately prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The community is to be considered 'a radically alienated social group that could expect little but suspicion from Jew and gentile alike.' This Markan community was apocalyptic and eschatological in orientation, and regarded itself as having been called into being by Jesus, and charged by him to carry forward its mission in the world. Mark believed that there was no possibility for peaceful co-existence between the Markan community and the political and religious authorities, just as there was none for Jesus; thus, the Markan community suffered tribulation arising from disturbances which were political, cosmic, and religious in origin. According to Kee, then, Mark's Gospel was written to encourage the Markan Christians and

¹³ H.C. Kee, *Community of the New Age. Studies in Mark's Gospel*, Philadelphia, 1977. See also his 'The Social Setting of Mark. An Apocalyptic Community,' in K.H. Richards (ed.), *SBL 1984 Seminar Papers*, Chico, 1984, pp. 245-255.

to strengthen them 'to persevere in the face of the mounting hostility and suffering that confronts them.'

A socio-historical approach to Mark's Gospel can also be found in Gerd Theissen's *Lokalkolorit und Zeitgeschichte in den Evangelien*, published in 1989.¹⁴ In this book Theissen posits that Mark's Gospel was written shortly after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 AD, in rural and small-town southern Syria. According to Theissen, the Christians for whom the Gospel was written, a group of people situated midway between Jews and gentiles, were experiencing pressures from all sides. Adapting the Christian traditions to the actual situation of his readers, Mark presented Jesus' Passion as a model of behaviour for the Markan community. Theissen seems to believe that, in the context of this objective, the motif of Jesus' secret identity, which underscores that Jesus is the suffering Son of Man, is of special importance in Mark's Gospel. According to Theissen, this motif has two functions. On the one hand, it is meant to counter and revise the 'worldly messianism' that had led to the Jewish Revolt against the Romans. On the other hand, it serves to introduce a new concept of discipleship. Mark intended to expand the traditional concept of discipleship, which came from the itinerant charismatic preachers who followed Jesus in a literal sense, in such a way as to include every follower of Jesus: in his Gospel Mark proclaims that true discipleship cannot be fulfilled without suffering. Thus Mark's Gospel is, as Theissen puts it, 'a call to discipleship.'

In short, Markan studies since Marxsen show an increasing interest in the question of the origin and purpose of Mark's Gospel. Several theories have been proposed concerning the time and place in which the Gospel was written, the community and situation it was meant to address, and the evangelist's message and authorial aim. Although many valuable observations have been made, none of the theories proposed is entirely convincing.

Marxsen's theory about the purpose of Mark's Gospel is weak

¹⁴ G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit und Zeitgeschichte in den Evangelien. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (NTOA 8), Göttingen, 1989; an English translation has been published under the title *The Gospels in Context. Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (transl. L.M. Maloney), Edinburgh, 1992. See also his 'Evangelien-schreibung und Gemeindeleitung. Pragmatische Motive bei der Abfassung des Markusevangeliums,' in B. Kollmann, et al. (edd.), *Antikes Judentum und frühes Christentum* (FS H. Stegemann) (BZNW 97), Berlin/New York, 1999, pp. 389-414.

since it depends to a large extent on the rather unusual and questionable assumption that Mk 16:7 refers to Jesus' parousia. If one regards Mk 16:7 as referring to the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection, as most scholars do, Marxsen's theory becomes highly implausible.

Some of Brandon's observations are very valuable, especially those concerning Mark's depiction of Jesus' ministry. His theory as a whole, however, lacks conviction since he adopts without question the traditional view that Mark's Gospel was written in Rome to address the needs of the Roman Christians. The Roman origin of Mark's Gospel, however, is no longer unchallenged, to say the least.

Weeden's reconstruction of Mark's purpose also has its weakness. The heart of Weeden's theory is his view that Mark intends to contest a christology that pictured Jesus as a miracle-worker. This view is open to the objection, however, that almost half of Mark's Gospel (Mk 1:1-8:26) presents Jesus as thaumaturge without any indication to the reader that this image needs correction. Mark's depiction of Jesus in Mk 1:1-8:26 is therefore to be considered an integral part of the evangelist's christology.

Kelber's conclusions about the purpose of Mark's Gospel are not very plausible either. His thesis depends largely on two suppositions. First, Kelber supposes that the negative attitude towards Jerusalem that he ascribes to Mark's Gospel reflects the opposition between the Markan Christians in Galilee and the Christian community in Jerusalem. In my view, however, Mark's bias against Jerusalem—if it is there at all—cannot so easily be translated into an opposition between two Christian communities. Secondly, Kelber assumes that Mark believes that the Kingdom of God will break through in Galilee. This assumption, however, is the result of an overvaluation of the geographical reference to Galilee in Mk 1:14-15. Thus the suppositions at the basis of Kelber's theory are rather weak.

Finally, the sociological studies of Kee and Theissen are not without problems either. The conclusions to which each of these scholars has come are certainly very interesting, the more so because they converge at several points. For instance, both scholars infer that the Markan Christians are to be located in southern Syria, and were facing hostility. In Kee's as well as in Theissen's theory, however, the causes of this hostility are rather vague. Kee seems to believe that the Markan Christians were experiencing problems because they

were a 'radically alienated group.' Theissen appears to associate their problems with the fact that the Christians were 'a group somewhere between Jews and gentiles.'¹⁵ Both scholars thus assume that the Markan Christians met with hostility merely because they were different, and therefore isolated, from their social context. In my view, this does not suffice to explain the serious threats Mark's addressees are confronted with. It may be true that, generally speaking, socially isolated groups are more liable to oppression than others. But that does not explain the actual cause of the oppression in any given case. In other words, Kee and Theissen are not sufficiently specific in identifying the actual cause that occasioned Mark's Gospel to be written; their theories remain unsatisfactory.

Summarizing, it may be said that since the fifties of the twentieth century, the origin and purpose of Mark's Gospel have been the subject of an animated scholarly debate. None of the theories proposed by the participants in the debate, however, offers convincing answers to the questions of the cause that gave rise to the genesis of the Gospel, and the evangelist's objective in writing it. Three issues seem to require further discussion.

First of all, the time and place of origin of Mark's Gospel need to be investigated anew, since the so-called 'traditional' view, according to which Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome during the sixties of the first century, has come under attack from several sides. Furthermore, the historical situation of the Markan community must be analysed again, since there is no consensus as to the circumstances of Mark's readers when he wrote his Gospel for them. Finally, the purpose of the Gospel needs to be re-examined, for the scholars mentioned above differ widely in their opinions about the message Mark intended to convey to his readers.

d. *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel and the Discussion about the Gospel's Genre*

Markan criticism in Marxsen's wake showed not only an increased interest in Mark's authorial intentions, the historical context in which his Gospel originated, and its purpose; the new approach also led to a new perspective on the Gospel's literary character.

¹⁵ See G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit*, p. 282; H.C. Kee, *Community of the New Age*, p. 100.

According to the form-critical consensus on Mark's Gospel, roughly from 1920 to 1950, the evangelist was scarcely more than a collector of traditions, and his Gospel a popular work without analogies in classical literature. The reassessment of the evangelist's contribution to the Gospel story, caused by the rise of redaction criticism during the 1950s and 1960s, entailed a revaluation of the literary character of the Gospel itself. As a result, the question of the Gospel's genre and its relation to the literary environment in which it was written became a subject of scholarly debate. This debate is of relevance to the present study, since the assumption underlying it is that knowing the genre of a text gives the reader insight into the purpose of that text, and the intentions of the author.¹⁶

Since the 1970s many attempts have been made to define the Gospel's place within the whole of ancient literature. Numerous articles and monographs have appeared that focus on the Gospel's genre, and in many other studies the issue is mentioned briefly.¹⁷ Initially all sorts of genres were proposed. Mark's Gospel has been compared with, for instance, Greek tragedy, tragi-comedy, historiography, Hellenistic biography, Socratic dialogue, and romance,¹⁸ but also

¹⁶ On the function of the 'genre' in interpreting texts, see, e.g., A. Boeckh, *Enzyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften*, Leipzig, 1886 (reprinted Darmstadt, 1966), pp. 82-85; E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, New Haven, 1967, pp. 262-263. See esp. p. 263: 'The question "To what genre does this text belong?" (...) is the most important question an interpreter could ask about a text, since its answer implies the way the text should be interpreted with respect to its shape and emphasis as well as the scope and direction of its meanings.' The concept of genre in Boeckh is otherwise not identical with that in Hirsch.

¹⁷ For an overview of the discussion up to the 1980s, see, e.g., V.K. Robbins, 'Mark as Genre,' in P.J. Achtemeier (ed.), *SBL 1980 Seminar Papers*, Chico, 1980, pp. 371-399; R.A. Guelich, 'The Gospel Genre,' in P. Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien. Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982* (WUNT 28), Tübingen, 1983, pp. 183-219; W.S. Vorster, 'Kerygma/History and the Gospel Genre,' *NTS* 29 (1983), pp. 87-95; idem, 'Der Ort der Gattung Evangelium in der Literaturgeschichte,' *VF* 29 (1984), pp. 2-25. For the discussion up to the 1990s, see, e.g., D. Dormeyer, *Evangelium als literarische und theologische Gattung* (EF 263), Darmstadt, 1989; R.A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (SNTS MS 70), Cambridge, 1992; D. Frickenschmidt, *Evangelium als Biographie. Die vier Evangelien im Rahmen antiker Erzählkunst* (TANZ 22), Tübingen, 1997.

¹⁸ Mark's Gospel has been compared with Greek tragedy by, e.g., G.G. Bilezikian, *The Liberated Gospel. A Comparison of the Gospel of Mark and Greek Tragedy* (BBM), Grand Rapids, 1977; with tragi-comedy by, e.g., D.O. Via, *Kerygma and Comedy in the New Testament. A Structuralist Approach to Hermeneutic*, Philadelphia, 1975, pp. 71-169; with historiography by, e.g., A. Dihle, 'Die Evangelien und die griechische Biographie,' in P. Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien. Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982* (WUNT

with the Old Testament stories about, for instance, Elijah and Elisha in 1 and 2 Kings, and Moses in Exodus and Deuteronomy.¹⁹ The current discussion seems to concentrate, however, on the question of whether or not Mark's Gospel belongs to the genre of Graeco-Roman biography, and a growing number of scholars seem to answer this question in the affirmative.

The focus of the current discussion on biography as a possible genre for Mark's Gospel is, in my view, well founded. The Gospel can be characterized as 'a self-contained prose narrative centered upon the career and death of a single individual.'²⁰ Therefore, it cannot belong to a poetic genre such as Greek tragedy, nor can it be classified with, for instance, the Elijah and Elisha stories (1 Kings 17-22 and 2 Kings 1-13) in which the individual is subordinated to the overall story, or books like Ruth or Jona that relate an event or incident rather than the career and death of an individual.²¹ Ancient biography is the closest parallel to the basic characterization of Mark's Gospel. It is right, therefore, to focus on the question of whether or not the Gospel belongs to this particular genre.

As already said, the assumption underlying the discussion about the genre of Mark's Gospel is that the Gospel's genre gives insight into the evangelist's objective in writing. In this respect the discussion has not, however, been fruitful. Apart from the fact that there is still no consensus as to whether or not Mark's Gospel is an ancient biography, scholars also continue to disagree about the purpose of

28), Tübingen, 1983, pp. 383-411, esp. p. 403; with Socratic dialogue by, e.g., D.L. Barr, *Toward a Definition of the Gospel Genre. A Generic Analysis and Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels and the Socratic Dialogues by means of Aristotle's Theory of Tragedy* (Dissertation Florida State University), Ann Arbor, 1974; with romance by, e.g., M. Reiser, 'Der Alexanderroman und das Markusevangelium,' in H. Cancik (ed.), *Markus-Philologie. Historische, literargeschichtliche und stilistische Untersuchungen zum zweiten Evangelium* (WUNT 33), Tübingen, 1984, pp. 131-163.

¹⁹ The Gospel has been compared with examples from Jewish literature by, e.g., K. Baltzer, *Die Biographie der Propheten*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1975, esp. pp. 184-189; M.G. Kline, 'The Old Testament Origins of the Gospel Genre,' *WThJ* 38 (1976), pp. 1-27; M.D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lectons in Matthew*, London, 1974, esp. pp. 199-201; D. Lührmann, 'Biographie des Gerechten als Evangelium. Vorstellungen zu einem Markus-Kommentar,' *WuD* 14 (1977), pp. 25-50.

²⁰ See C. Bryan, *A Preface to Mark. Notes on the Gospel in its Literary and Cultural Settings*, New York/Oxford, 1993, pp. 23-24.

²¹ See C. Bryan, *A Preface to Mark*, pp. 23-24; D.E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (LEC 8), Philadelphia, 1987, p. 43; idem, 'The Gospels. Biography or Theology?,' *Bible Review* 6 (1990), pp. 14-21, esp. p. 19.

ancient biography itself. Some scholars have argued that ancient biographies have a strong moral orientation, others believe that being biographies the canonical Gospels have an apologetic, polemic, or propagandistic purpose.²²

In other words, since the 1970s there has been a renewed scholarly interest in the question of how Mark's Gospel is to be categorized as a literary work. However, a consensus has not been reached. No more agreement has been attained with regard to the question of the purpose of Mark's Gospel.

2. THE AIMS AND PREMISES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The above overview of the history of modern Markan scholarship shows that the question of the origin and purpose of Mark's Gospel demands re-examination. The redaction-critical studies on the subject, despite their many valuable observations, have not offered a convincing alternative to the so-called 'traditional' view on the origin of Mark's Gospel, a view which has been challenged since the beginning of the twentieth century. Furthermore, the literary-critical discussion concerning the genre of Mark's Gospel has not led to agreement as to the Gospel's purpose. It is the aim of the present study, therefore, to find an answer to the questions of what motivated the evangelist, a few decades after Jesus' death, to write a story about his ministry, and what the evangelist's main objective was in writing.

In search for tenable answers to the questions concerning the origin and purpose of Mark's Gospel, I will start from the premise that the Gospel text can provide us—indirectly—with information about the actual, historical situation of the evangelist and his readers.²³

²² For the moral orientation of ancient biography see, e.g., A. Dihle, 'Die Evangelien und die griechische Biographie.' For an apologetic purpose see, e.g., C.H. Talbert, art. 'Biography, Ancient,' *ABD* I, pp. 745-749. For a propagandistic purpose see, e.g., D.E. Aune, *The New Testament*.

²³ Henceforth, when speaking about the 'readers' of Mark's Gospel, I mean the implied or intended readers, that is, the particular readership Mark had in mind when he wrote his Gospel. When speaking about 'the situation of Mark's readers,' I mean the situation of Mark's intended readers as perceived by the evangelist. It does not matter whether or not Mark's perception was accurate. I wish to investigate what motivated Mark to write his Gospel; therefore, it suffices to reconstruct the situation of Mark's intended readers as it appeared to the eyes of the Markan evangelist.

This premise is based on the assumption that Mark as an author was at least partially determined by the circumstances in which he was living. These circumstances must have made their mark on the Gospel and be mirrored in it. Studying the Gospel and especially the way in which Mark has selected and reworked the Christian traditions available to him may be supposed to shed light, therefore, on the evangelist's interests and concerns, and may thus help in the reconstruction of the actual situation in which Mark and his readers were living.²⁴ Whether the main message Mark intends to convey in his Gospel reacts to this situation remains to be ascertained.

Furthermore, I presume that there existed a close relationship between the author of this Gospel and his readers.²⁵ This assumption is warranted, first of all, by the fact that Mark's readers are expected to be familiar with certain persons mentioned in the Gospel who are otherwise unknown. In Mk 15:21 Simon of Cyrene is said to be 'the father of Alexander and Rufus.' This explanatory remark is meant to enable the reader to identify Simon of Cyrene. Apparently, the evangelist assumes that his readers are acquainted with Alexander and Rufus (whom we do not know otherwise), for there is no point in identifying someone by referring to others who are unknown. The same can be said about the mention of James the younger and Joses in Mk 15:40. They are unknown to us, but introduced to help the reader to identify the second Mary mentioned in this verse. Apparently, Mark supposes that they are known to his readers. Also the occurrence of the geographical names Magdala (Mk 15:40, 47; 16:1) and Dalmanutha (Mk 8:10) is noteworthy in this respect.²⁶ Neither of these places is mentioned in sources outside Mark's sphere of

²⁴ See, e.g., W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus*, esp. pp. 7-16; S.G.F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem*, esp. p. 186; T.J. Weeden, *Mark*, esp. pp. 1-19; H.C. Kee, *Community of the New Age*, esp. pp. 10-13. I am aware of the objections raised against such 'mirror reading.' They have been pointed out by several authors, especially with respect to the Fourth Gospel. But there seems to be no alternative if one wants to understand Mark's Gospel historically while renouncing as unreliable the information on the Gospel given by early Christian authors.

²⁵ The arguments in favour of this presumption are discussed extensively by J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27), New York/London, 2000, pp. 25-28. See also E. Best, 'Mark's Readers. A Profile,' in F. Van Segbroeck, et al. (edd.), *The Four Gospels 1992* (FS F. Neirynck) II (BETL 100B), Leuven, 1992, pp. 839-858, esp. p. 857.

²⁶ For the text-critical problem concerning Dalmanutha in Mk 8:10, see Chapter 2, note 129.

influence, and yet there is no hint for the reader as to where he should locate them. Obviously, the reader is supposed to know these names and to have an idea of where the places bearing these names were located.

In short it can be said that the evangelist and his readers shared knowledge about certain geographical details as well as certain persons. This observation justifies the assumption that there existed a close relationship between Mark and the readers for whom he wrote his Gospel, and that they must be thought to have lived at the same time and in the same area.

Finally, I assume that the original readers of Mark's Gospel were also in one way or another associated with each other. It is not possible for us to determine precisely what their mutual relationship was; it is uncertain, for instance, whether they all lived in the same place or in different places within the same area. It seems justifiable, though, to characterize Mark's readership as a 'community.' For the Gospel is directed to people who live in the same time, the same circumstances, and roughly the same region; they seem to know the same people; they are addressed by the same message; and they are all in one way or another related to the author.²⁷ Therefore I will speak about the original readers of the Gospel as the 'Markan community.'

Let it be noted in passing that the original readers of Mark's Gospel were certainly Christians. First of all, the readers of the Gospel are expected to understand without clarification, for instance, the christological titles applied to Jesus ('Son of Man,' 'Son of God,' etc.), and to share the expectation of his future parousia (Mk 13:24-27; 14:62). Moreover, they are expected to fill in, for instance, the positive result of Jesus' temptation in Mk 1:12-13, and the appropriate answers to the rhetorical questions about Jesus' identity in Mk 4:41 and 6:2. Moreover, Mark assumes that his readers accept a Christian interpretation of Old Testament passages (see, e.g., Mk 12:35-37). These observations make a non-Christian readership unlikely.²⁸

²⁷ The same has been argued by W.R. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark*, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 16-17.

²⁸ See also E. Best, 'Mark's Readers,' pp. 847-848. Furthermore, Mark's readership comprises both Jewish and gentile Christians. Mk 13:9 (εἰς συνέδρια καὶ εἰς συναγωγὰς

Another argument in favour of the assumption that Mark's Gospel was written for a Christian readership is, in my view, the fact that the evangelist adds elements of encouragement or comfort in passages which refer to the situation of Christians, as well as ethical instructions about what Christians should or should not do. A case in point is Mk 13:9-13. In this passage the evangelist has Jesus predict that his followers will be persecuted, but that they should not worry, because the Holy Spirit will support them and they will be saved if they persevere. Such encouragement is only appropriate if the readers are thought to be Christians. Similarly, the call to accept suffering in following Jesus in Mk 8:34-9:1, the harsh admonition not to lose faith in Mk 9:42-50, and the exhortation to be subservient in Mk 10:42-45 are relevant only for a group of Christian readers. These observations show that the assumption that Mark's readers are Christians is plausible, and that it is justified to speak about Mark's readers as the 'Markan Christian community.'

Admittedly, the suppositions advocated above are not undisputed. Since the rise of redaction criticism, the prevailing view has been that an evangelist addressed his Gospel to the community to which he belonged, and that a correct understanding of the situation of the evangelist's community is crucial for an appropriate interpretation of his Gospel. However, since the publication in 1998 of a collection of essays entitled *The Gospels for All Christians*, edited by Richard Bauckham, this consensus view has come under attack.²⁹ According to Bauckham and his co-authors, the Gospels were not written for a specific church or group of churches, but for a non-specific Christian audience, that is, for 'any and every Christian community in the late-first-century Roman Empire';³⁰ the situation of the evangelist's com-

δαρήσεσθε) addresses readers under the control of synagogue authorities, i.e. Jews. The explanatory phrases in Mk 7:2 (τοῦτο ἐστὶν ἀνίπτος) and 14:42 (ὁ ἐστὶν προσάββατον) obviously presuppose gentile readers.

²⁹ R. Bauckham (ed.), *The Gospels for All Christians. Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, Edinburgh, 1998. A view similar to that of Bauckham has recently been proposed by M. Hengel, *The Four Gospels*, pp. 106-115.

³⁰ R. Bauckham, 'Introduction,' in R. Bauckham (ed.), *The Gospels for All Christians. Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, Edinburgh, 1998, pp. 1-7, esp. p. 1.

munity is supposed to have no hermeneutic relevance.³¹ Bauckham's arguments, however, are weak.³²

In his article entitled 'For Whom were Gospels written?,' Bauckham begins by arguing that, since Luke and Matthew knew that Mark's Gospel circulated among the churches, they must have expected their Gospels to circulate at least as widely as Mark's Gospel had already done; therefore, it is improbable that these evangelists addressed their Gospels to the restricted audience of their own communities.³³ This argument is, however, rather unconvincing. First, the fact that Mark's Gospel circulated among several churches does not mean that its author wrote it with this specific intention. Second, Luke and Matthew may have realized that in the future their Gospels might circulate in the same way as Mark's Gospel did, but this does not mean that they *intended* their Gospels to circulate; in writing their Gospels they may still have aimed at addressing the issues and concerns of their own communities.³⁴

Bauckham's second argument is also not convincing. He argues that the lack of agreement in the scholarly reconstructions of the evangelists' communities throws doubt on the method of searching for the identities of those communities at all.³⁵ However, the existence of different theories does not imply that these theories are all entirely useless, nor does disagreement among scholars show that their method is wrong. It shows at the most that the evidence is open to more than one interpretation, and that one can disagree as to which interpretation is the most plausible.³⁶

Next, Bauckham criticizes those scholars who consider the Gospels as addressed to a specific Christian community for interpreting

³¹ R. Bauckham, 'For Whom were Gospels Written?,' in R. Bauckham (ed.), *The Gospels for All Christians. Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, Edinburgh, 1998, pp. 9-48, esp. p. 44.

³² The following pages owe much to a discussion devoted to Bauckham's arguments by Professor C.M. Tuckett, at a conference of the Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion, Utrecht, 20 September 2002.

³³ R. Bauckham, 'For Whom were Gospels Written?,' pp. 12-13.

³⁴ P.F. Esler argues that Matthew and Luke are not likely to have aimed at a general audience, since they must have realised that 'anything they wrote was just as likely to be savaged in congregations it finally reached as Mark had been when it fell into their hands.' P.F. Esler, 'Community and Gospel in Early Christianity. A Response to Richard Bauckham's *Gospels for All Christians*,' *SJTh* 51 (1998), pp. 235-248, esp. p. 241; see also D.C. Sim, 'The Gospels for All Christians? A Response to Richard Bauckham,' *JSNT* 84 (2001), pp. 3-27, esp. p. 16.

³⁵ R. Bauckham, 'For Whom were Gospels Written?,' p. 20.

³⁶ See also D.C. Sim, 'A Response to Richard Bauckham,' pp. 24-25.

certain features of a Gospel that would readily apply to a very large number of Christian communities, as applying to a specific Christian audience rather than to a general Christian audience.³⁷ Although Bauckham may be right in this observation, it does not in itself warrant the conclusion that the Gospels were written for general circulation rather than for a particular community. The fact that certain features in the Gospels could apply also to communities other than the evangelists' own can, at most, clarify why, soon after their publication, the Gospels became widely accepted within the Christian movement. It does not prove anything with regard to the intentions of the evangelists.³⁸

Subsequently, Bauckham states that scholars who consider the Gospels as addressed to a specific Christian community are guilty of a genre mistake. According to Bauckham, these scholars are treating the Gospels as though they were Pauline epistles; but, since the Gospels are not letters, they are not suitable 'to address specified addressees in all the particularity of their circumstances.'³⁹ This, however, is a fallacy. The fact that the Gospels are not letters does not necessarily mean that they were not written to address the situation of a specific audience. A gospel and a letter can be two different genres, and still both be written to address the situation of a specific audience.

Bauckham argues that the Gospels are probably biographies, and as such cannot be meant 'to address the very specific circumstances of a small community of people;' rather they were written 'for any competent reader.'⁴⁰ However, it is not at all certain that the Gospels are ancient biographies. And even if they are to be categorized in this way, this does not mean that they were, therefore, written for a non-specific audience. Graeco-Roman biographers, such as Plutarch or Suetonius, may have aimed at a broad readership, but not at an indefinite one. These authors belonged to the higher echelons of society and were certainly writing with an upper-class audience in mind. In short, if the Gospels are to be categorized as ancient biographies,

³⁷ R. Bauckham, 'For Whom were Gospels Written?', pp. 22-25.

³⁸ See also D.C. Sim, 'A Response to Richard Bauckham,' p. 23.

³⁹ R. Bauckham, 'For Whom were Gospels Written?', pp. 26-28, esp. p. 27.

⁴⁰ R. Bauckham, 'For Whom were Gospels Written?', p. 28.

it is still easily possible that the evangelists used this literary form with a specific and limited readership in mind.⁴¹

Furthermore, Bauckham claims that written texts were produced for a readership outside the author's immediate circle. The evangelists, then, expected their Gospels to circulate to readers unknown to themselves, and this in turn again proves, according to Bauckham, that their works were meant to be read by readers outside their immediate reach.⁴² This argument, however, is also weak. First, as was already said above, the fact that the evangelists may have *expected* their Gospels to circulate does not mean that they *intended* their Gospels to circulate. Second, it is very doubtful whether Bauckham's distinction between oral communication implying a local audience and written communication implying a more general audience accords at all with the facts.⁴³

The major argument Bauckham sets out in support of his thesis that the Gospels were written for an indefinite audience rather than for specific communities concerns the nature of the early Christian movement.⁴⁴ As Bauckham presents it, the first-century Christian movement was not a collection of independent, self-sufficient churches, but a network of communities in lively communication with each other. These communities had a strong sense of being part of a world-wide movement. Members of the early Christian movement regularly travelled between different churches; most of the Christian leaders moved around, from church to church, and worked in more than one community at different times. The evangelists, who, according to Bauckham, were probably part of this mobile group of Christian leaders, are not likely to have confined their attention 'to the local needs and problems of a single, homogeneous community,' when composing a Gospel.⁴⁵

Bauckham's picture of the nature of the early Christian movement is slightly misleading. For an important part, Bauckham's evidence relies on the historicity of Acts, which gives an image that is not really representative of the majority of first-century Christian com-

⁴¹ Cf. also D.C. Sim, 'A Response to Richard Bauckham,' pp. 18-19; P.F. Esler, 'Community and Gospel,' p. 244.

⁴² R. Bauckham, 'For Whom were Gospels Written?,' pp. 28-30.

⁴³ See J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 27; D.C. Sim, 'A Response to Richard Bauckham,' p. 20.

⁴⁴ R. Bauckham, 'For Whom were Gospels Written?,' pp. 30-44.

⁴⁵ R. Bauckham, 'For Whom were Gospels Written?,' p. 37.

munities.⁴⁶ Moreover, some of Bauckham's evidence is rather late for reconstructing the situation in the second half of the first century. David C. Sim has pointed out that the evidence relevant to the first century AD does not show that 'there was substantial movement between the whole Christian world, but only that there was constant contact between similar churches in restricted areas.'⁴⁷ Sim also notes that the differences and conflicts that existed within the early Christian movement make it unlikely that 'its members identified themselves and other Christians as participants in a single and unified movement.'⁴⁸ Finally, and most importantly, all the evidence Bauckham presents to argue that the authors of the Gospels were mobile leaders who wrote with a general readership in mind, is circumstantial. Bauckham argues that *some* people in the first-century Roman Empire travelled widely; he does not prove that any of the evangelists did actually move around from church to church, nor that they wrote their Gospels with relation to broader concerns within the Christian movement than the concerns of their own communities.⁴⁹

In sum, the arguments Bauckham presents in favour of his position that the Gospels were written for a general, indefinite audience are unconvincing. There is no reason to abandon the consensus view that the Gospels were written for a limited readership. The current view even has an important advantage: if one assumes that the Gospels were written for a specific, limited audience, it is easier to explain the differences between them. For instance, the fact that Mark explains to his readers that Simon of Cyrene is 'the father of Alexander and Rufus' (Mk 15:21), while Luke and Matthew omit this explanation, is difficult to understand if one supposes that all three evangelists were writing for the same, general audience. If one supposes that Luke and Matthew had in view an audience different from Mark's, the omission can be easily explained as the result of the fact that they expected their readers to be unfamiliar with Alexander and Rufus.⁵⁰

It remains justified, therefore, to consider the Gospels as written

⁴⁶ Cf. D.C. Sim, 'A Response to Richard Bauckham,' pp. 11-12.

⁴⁷ D.C. Sim, 'A Response to Richard Bauckham,' pp. 11-15, esp. p. 11.

⁴⁸ D.C. Sim, 'A Response to Richard Bauckham,' pp. 10-11, esp. p. 10.

⁴⁹ See also D.C. Sim, 'A Response to Richard Bauckham,' p. 14.

⁵⁰ See also J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, pp. 27-28.

for specific readerships, not for an indefinite one. Whether their intended audiences are broad or rather limited is to be established for each Gospel individually. In the case of Mark's Gospel, the intended readership was, in my view, limited to what I have defined as the 'Markan Christian community.'

As already said above, the aim of the present study is to investigate the issues of the origin and purpose of Mark's Gospel. Therefore, it is necessary to go into the questions of where and when Mark's Gospel was written, who were meant to read it, and what it was in the situation of the evangelist and his intended readers that formed the immediate cause for writing the Gospel. One must also examine what message Mark intended to convey to his readers, and why he decided to embody his message in a story about Jesus' ministry. In this context it needs to be considered whether, and if so in what way, the evangelist reacts to the situation of his readers.

In the preceding pages it has become clear that several scholars, including Brandon, Kee, and Theissen, have argued that the Christians for whom Mark's Gospel was written were suffering hostility. In the first chapter of this book, I intend to argue that the circumstances in which the Markan evangelist and his readers were living are indeed likely to have been marked by hostility, and even persecution.

Next, I intend to investigate where and when Mark's readers are to be situated, and why they were persecuted. As has already been said, there is no consensus as to the date and place of origin of Mark's Gospel. Nor has a satisfactory conclusion been reached with regard to the reason for, and actual cause of, the persecution of Mark's readers. Kee and Theissen appear to be rather vague on this point, and Brandon's idea that the hostilities were a consequence of the triumphal processions of Vespasian and Titus in Rome depends on the now disputed assumption that Mark's Gospel was meant to address the situation of Roman Christians. The second chapter of this study will examine, therefore, the external as well as the internal evidence available with relation to the date of Mark's Gospel and its place of origin. The third chapter will look into the nature of the persecution of the Markan Christians, and suggest a possible reason why they may have been persecuted.

In the following chapters, that is, chapters 4-6, a renewed effort

will be made to establish what message the evangelist tries to convey to his readers. I intend to argue that the main message of Mark's Gospel is meant to address the situation of persecution in which Mark's readers are living.

The final chapter, chapter 7, will try to ascertain the evangelist's authorial aim, and, as far as possible, clarify why he chooses the Gospel's literary form for attaining his goal. This chapter will also reconsider how, judging from the Gospel's form and purpose, Mark's Gospel is to be characterized as a literary work, and how it should be categorized within the framework of the literature of the Graeco-Roman world.

PART ONE

THE SITUATION OF MARK'S READERS

CHAPTER ONE

THE PERSECUTION OF THE MARKAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

Anybody who wants to define the circumstances that led to the writing of Mark's Gospel must take into account the topic of the future persecution of Jesus' followers. This topic recurs in four passages.

Mark deals with the persecution of Christians most extensively in Mk 13:9-13, where he has Jesus predict that his followers will be persecuted because of their belief in him. Previously to that, in Mk 8:34-9:1, Mark's Jesus emphatically cautions his disciples that following him means that one has to be prepared to die because of one's faith. Further, the evangelist has Jesus refer to the persecution of Christians in the parable of the sower and its interpretation in Mk 4:1-20, and in Jesus' conversation with the disciples about the rewards of discipleship in Mk 10:23-31.

In this chapter I intend to argue that these four passages indicate that Mark's Gospel was written for a Christian community that suffered persecution. A redaction-critical analysis of Mk 4:17, 8:34-35, 10:29-30, and 13:9-13 will show that, in all four passages mentioned, the evangelist expanded the tradition known to him by elaborating the persecution theme. These redactional revisions of the traditional material indicate that Mark had a special interest in the topic of the persecution of Christians. It is likely, therefore, that hostility and persecution played a part in the actual situation of the evangelist and his readers. It will be argued that this conclusion is corroborated by the fact that, in all four passages, the evangelist intends to comfort and encourage his readers.

1. Mk 4:17

From the beginning of his ministry, Mark's Jesus meets with enthusiasm as well as opposition. On the one hand, he is followed by a crowd that steadily grows and becomes more and more impressed by him (cf. Mk 1:33; 2:2; 3:7-10; 4:1-2). On the other hand, his words and actions arouse the suspicion and aversion of the Jewish leaders and even of his own family (cf. Mk 2:19, 24; 3:2, 6, 20-22). In the so-called 'parables chapter,' Mk 4:1-34, Mark has Jesus reflect on reactions to his ministry.¹ The main issue addressed in Mk 4:1-34 is the fact that the Christian message is not accepted by everyone.²

The so-called 'parables chapter' opens with an introduction describing the setting of Jesus' words (vv. 1-2). Mark has Jesus relate the parable of the sower and its explanation (vv. 3-20), in which Jesus foretells that only a small proportion of those who hear the gospel will remain faithful to it. Then, Mark's Jesus assures his audience that the gospel has not come into the world merely to pass away (vv. 21-23), and that everyone will be judged on their response and faithfulness to the Christian message (vv. 24-25). Finally, Mark has Jesus relate the parable of the seed growing of itself (vv. 26-29), and that of the mustard seed (vv. 30-32), in which the evangelist has Jesus emphasize that God's kingdom is coming although one may not notice it yet. The section is concluded by the evangelist's remark that Jesus taught the crowd in parables, and explained everything in private to his disciples (vv. 33-34).

The passage that interests us now is Mk 4:17, which belongs to the larger section Mk 4:1-20. This larger section comprises the parable of

¹ Mk 4:1-34 is a literary unity framed by vv. 1-2 and vv. 33-34, which form an *inclusio*. See also R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (HTKNT 2) I, Freiburg/Basel/Wien, 1976, p. 227; D. Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (HNT 3), Tübingen, 1987, p. 81; R.H. Gundry, *Mark. A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, Grand Rapids, 1993, p. 186; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27), New York/London, 2000, p. 289; J. Dupont, 'Le chapitre des paraboles,' in F. Neirynck (ed.), *Études sur les Évangiles synoptiques I* (BETL 70A), Leuven, 1985, pp. 215-235, esp. p. 216; idem, 'La transmission des paroles de Jésus sur la lampe et la mesure dans Marc 4,21-25 et dans la tradition Q,' in F. Neirynck (ed.), *Études sur les Évangiles synoptiques I* (BETL 70A), Leuven, 1985, pp. 259-294, esp. p. 263.

² See also J. Dupont, 'Le chapitre des paraboles,' pp. 221 and 235; idem, 'La parabole du semeur,' in F. Neirynck (ed.), *Études sur les Évangiles synoptiques I* (BETL 70A), Leuven, 1985, pp. 236-258, esp. pp. 240 and 247; idem, 'Marc 4,21-25 et Q,' p. 265; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 290; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 191.

the sower (Mk 4:1-9), a reflection on the purpose of parables in general (Mk 4:10-12), and the interpretation of the parable of the sower (Mk 4:13-20). I will paraphrase the content of Mk 4:1-20.

While teaching the crowd that has gathered around him, Mark's Jesus relates the following parable (vv. 1-2). A sower sows seed (v. 3). Not all of it, however, thrives. Some of the seed falls along the road and is eaten by birds (v. 4); some falls on rocky ground and is scorched by the sun (vv. 5-6); some falls among thorns and is choked (v. 7). Only the seed that falls on good soil brings forth grain 'growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundred-fold' (v. 8). Mark's Jesus concludes by urging his audience to take the parable to heart (v. 9).

Then, when the crowd has dispersed, those who are around Jesus with the Twelve ask him about the parables he relates to the crowd (v. 10). First, Mark has Jesus say that the purpose of his speaking in parables is to conceal 'the mystery of the kingdom of God' from 'those outside' (vv. 11-12). Subsequently, Mark's Jesus returns to the parable of the sower he related in Mk 4:3-9 and reveals its meaning (v. 13).

The seed the sower sows is the gospel (v. 14). The seed that falls along the roadside and is eaten by birds refers to those who hear the gospel, but do not respond to it (v. 15). The seed that falls on rocky ground and is scorched by the sun refers to those who on hearing the gospel embrace it, but withdraw 'when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word' (vv. 16-17). The seed that falls among thorns and is choked refers to those who are kept from accepting the gospel by 'cares for the world' such as wealth (vv. 18-19). Finally, the seed that falls into good soil refers to those who accept the gospel and 'bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold' (v. 20).

In Mk 4:17, the passage under consideration, it is explained that the seed sown on rocky ground refers to those who 'have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.' I intend to argue that, in this verse, the phrase 'but they have no root, and endure only for a while' (καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ῥίζαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλὰ πρόσκαιροί εἰσιν), and the words 'or persecution' (ἢ διωγμοῦ), 'immediately' (εὐθύς), and possibly 'on account of the word' (διὰ τὸν λόγον) are due to Mark's redaction of an earlier tradition. They reflect his interest in the issue of the persecution of Christians, and his attempt to

actualize the traditional material contained in the parable and its interpretation with a view to the situation of his readers.

With regard to the pre-Markan tradition in Mk 4:1-20, it is often assumed that the parable of the sower related in Mk 4:3-9, as well as its interpretation given in Mk 4:14-20, belonged to Mark's tradition. This view has much to commend it.

Christopher M. Tuckett has shown that there are good reasons to assume that Mk 4:10 is of pre-Markan origin.³ He observes that this verse contains some elements that are clearly un-Markan. The phrase κατὰ μόνας, for instance, is a hapax in Mark.⁴ The verb ἐρωτάω, too, can be regarded as un-Markan since Mark usually writes ἐπερωτάω.⁵ Also the overloaded reference to Jesus' audience (οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα) is viewed by Tuckett as an indication that, in v. 10, Mark was reworking and elaborating a tradition.⁶

The un-Markan features in v. 10 indicate that in writing this verse Mark used a pre-Markan tradition. Now this verse is the transition between the parable and the explanation. If in writing v. 10 Mark used a source, the source must have contained the parable of the sower as well as its explanation. Both the parable and the explanation, then, are of pre-Markan origin.⁷

The parable and the explanation also, however, show clear evidence of Markan redaction. There is general agreement that vv. 11-12 are a Markan insertion which interrupts the original unity of the request of the disciples (v. 10) and the interpretation given by Jesus

³ C.M. Tuckett, 'Mark's Concerns in the Parables Chapter (Mark 4,1-34),' *Biblica* 69 (1988), pp. 1-26, esp. p. 8.

⁴ Mark usually uses κατ' ἰδίαν. See Mk 4:34; 6:31, 32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3. See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* I, p. 237; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 85; J. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (EKK 2) I, Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1978, p. 162 note 2; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (WBC 34a), Dallas, 1989, p. 203.

⁵ Mark uses ἐπερωτάω 25 times, ἐρωτάω only 3 times. See also P. Dschulnigg, *Sprache, Redaktion und Intention des Markusevangeliums. Eigentümlichkeiten der Sprache des Markus-Evangeliums und ihre Bedeutung für die Redaktionskritik*, Stuttgart, 1986, pp. 136-137; J. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 162 note 2; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. 204.

⁶ See also J. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 162 note 2; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 85; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. 204; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 301.

⁷ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* I, pp. 226-227 and 245-246; J. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 157; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 80-81; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. 189; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, pp. 289-290 and 310; J. Dupont, 'Le chapitre des paraboles,' pp. 218-219.

(vv. 14-20). The plural τὰς παραβολάς in v. 10 seems to reflect a redactional attempt to bring v. 10 in line with the more general theory about Jesus' teaching in parables given by Mark in vv. 11-12. In the pre-Markan source, the request mentioned in v. 10 was probably for an explanation just of the parable of the sower. In that case, the pre-Markan form of v. 10 had the singular τὴν παραβολήν.⁸ The plural is Markan redaction.⁹

Many scholars believe that at least part of v. 13 should also be regarded as a redaction by Mark. The double question,¹⁰ Jesus' rebuke of the disciples,¹¹ and the appearance of πῶς, possibly a favourite term of Mark's, indicate that at least v. 13b belongs to the final Markan redactional stage.¹² The above observations are of relevance, since if Mark intervened in vv. 11-13, his intervention is at least a possibility in the following vv. 14-20.

For the purpose of the present study, it is not necessary to study Mark's redaction for the whole of Mk 4:14-20. It suffices to examine Mark's redactional part in the wording of Mk 4:17.

Mk 4:17 reads 'but they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away' (καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ρίζαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλὰ πρόσκαιροί εἰσιν, εἴτα γενομένης θλίψεως ἢ διωγμοῦ διὰ τὸν λόγον εὐθὺς σκανδαλίζονται). This verse as a whole is an explanation of Mk 4:6, which describes the fate of the seed that falls on rocky ground: 'And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it

⁸ Cf. Mk 7:17.

⁹ See also J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I*, p. 162; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 81 and 85-86; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 290; J. Dupont, 'Le chapitre des paraboles,' pp. 218-219; C.M. Tuckett, 'Parables Chapter,' p. 9; J. Lambrecht, 'Redaction and Theology in Mk., IV,' in M. Sabbe (ed.), *L'Évangile selon Marc. Tradition et rédaction* (BETL 34), Leuven, 1988, pp. 269-308, esp. pp. 277-278; H. Räisänen, *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark's Gospel* (transl. C.M. Tuckett), Edinburgh, 1990, p. 116; cf. R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium I*, p. 237; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, pp. 199-202 and 204-205.

¹⁰ See F. Neirynck, *Duality in Mark. Contributions to the Study of the Markan Redaction* (BETL 31), Leuven, 1988, pp. 57 and 125; J. Lambrecht, 'Redaction,' pp. 280-281; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, pp. 219-220.

¹¹ Cf. Mk 7:18 and 8:17. See, e.g., J. Lambrecht, 'Redaction,' p. 281.

¹² See also J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I*, pp. 162 and 173; J. Marcus, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* (SBL DS 90), Atlanta, 1986, p. 35; idem, *Mark 1-8*, p. 310; C.M. Tuckett, 'Parables Chapter,' p. 9; cf. J. Dupont, 'Le chapitre des paraboles,' pp. 218-219. J. Lambrecht, 'Redaction,' p. 280, thinks that the whole of v. 13 is the result of Markan redaction.

had no root, it withered away' (καὶ ὅτε ἀνέτειλεν ὁ ἥλιος ἐκαυματίσθη καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ρίζαν ἐξηράνθη).

In v. 6 the phrase καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ρίζαν ἐξηράνθη shows clear signs of Mark's redaction. Verse 6 as a whole is a striking example of the duality characteristic of Mark's style. The phrases διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ρίζαν ἐξηράνθη and ὅτε ἀνέτειλεν ὁ ἥλιος ἐκαυματίσθη have the same function: both phrases explain why the seed does not come up. Moreover, διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν in v. 6 is a repetition of διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν in v. 5.¹³ The verb ξηραίνω at the end of v. 6 is a Markan favourite.¹⁴ Verse 6 καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ρίζαν ἐξηράνθη should, therefore, be regarded as a Markan redactional addition.¹⁵

Jan Lambrecht argues convincingly that if v. 6 καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ρίζαν ἐξηράνθη is to be considered a Markan addition, then v. 17 καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ρίζαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς should also be considered redactional.¹⁶ In fact, Mark is responsible not only for v. 17 καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ρίζαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, but also for ἀλλὰ πρόσκαιροί εἰσιν, since the latter phrase is a duplicate of οὐκ ἔχουσιν ρίζαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, typical of Mark's style.¹⁷ Consequently, the whole of καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ρίζαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλὰ πρόσκαιροί εἰσιν in v. 17 is due to Mark's intervention.¹⁸

The view that v. 17 καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ρίζαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλὰ πρόσκαιροί εἰσιν is the result of Markan redaction is confirmed by the appearance of the double statement οὐκ ... ἀλλὰ The antithetic parallelism resulting from the use of οὐκ ... ἀλλὰ ... is widely acknowledged as characteristic of Mark.¹⁹

Let us now turn to v. 17 εἴτα γενομένης θλίψεως ἢ διωγμοῦ διὰ

¹³ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 77.

¹⁴ See J.C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae. Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*, Oxford, 1909² (reprint 1968), p. 13.

¹⁵ See also C.M. Tuckett, 'Parables Chapter,' pp. 22-23; cf. J.D. Crossan, 'The Seed Parables of Jesus,' *JBL* 92 (1973), pp. 244-266, esp. pp. 246-247. Crossan fails to decide whether v. 6 καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ρίζαν ἐξηράνθη was added at the stage of Markan redaction or earlier. The typical Markan style of v. 6 καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ρίζαν ἐξηράνθη, however, compels one to regard these words as belonging to the final redactional stage. C.M. Tuckett, 'Parables Chapter,' pp. 22-23, and J. Marcus, *Mystery*, pp. 32-33, follow Crossan, but rightly regard both v. 6 καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ρίζαν ἐξηράνθη and v. 17 καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ρίζαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλὰ πρόσκαιροί εἰσιν as Markan redaction.

¹⁶ J. Lambrecht, 'Redaction,' p. 300.

¹⁷ See J. Lambrecht, 'Redaction,' p. 300.

¹⁸ See also C.M. Tuckett, 'Parables Chapter,' pp. 22-23; J. Marcus, *Mystery*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁹ F. Neirynck, *Duality*, pp. 60 and 90.

τὸν λόγον εὐθὺς σκανδαλίζονται, to see what can be regarded as Markan redaction there.

Lambrecht rightly points out that θλίψις ἢ διωγμός is a dual expression typical of Mark.²⁰ Since it is probable that Mark's source mentioned at least one reason for believers abandoning their faith, either θλίψις or διωγμός occurred in the source. It is more likely that Mark added the more specific and explanatory phrase ἢ διωγμός to the more general θλίψις, rather than the other way round.

Joel Marcus argues that the combination of θλίψις and διωγμός is an early Christian cliché and cannot serve as an argument for Markan redaction in v. 17.²¹ However, except for the synoptic parallels to Mk 4:17, there are only two instances of the combination in early Christian literature down to Clement of Alexandria: Rom 8:35 and 2 Thess 1:4. Neither of these warrants Marcus' conclusion that in θλίψις ἢ διωγμός the evangelist used a fixed expression.

In 2 Thess 1:4 the addressees are praised for the endurance they show ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς διωγμοῖς ὑμῶν καὶ ταῖς θλίψεσιν αἷς ἀνέχεσθε. First of all, it should be noted that both θλίψις and διωγμός in 2 Thess 1:4 are in the plural, not in the singular as in Mark. Secondly, they appear in reverse order. Thirdly, they do not form a simple combination, but are both qualified, διωγμός by ὑμῶν, and θλίψις by αἷς ἀνέχεσθε. Thus the phrase in 2 Thess differs considerably from that in Mk 4:17.

Rom 8:35 is not a close parallel to Mk 4:17 either. There θλίψις and διωγμός occur in a so-called list of hardships. The tribulations enumerated are the adversities Christians may encounter. In this list θλίψις and διωγμός do not even appear alongside: they are separated by another item in the series of hardships, στενοχωρία. The separation of θλίψις and διωγμός by another hardship in Rom 8:35 is an indication that θλίψις ἢ διωγμός is not a fixed expression. In this instance, the only reason for the two terms occurring together in the same context is that they have related meanings.

All other instances of the combination of θλίψις ἢ διωγμός retrieved with the aid of the TLG are later than the middle of the second century AD. Therefore, Marcus' view that θλίψις ἢ διωγμός is a traditional, fixed expression has no basis in the sources. The phrase at

²⁰ J. Lambrecht, 'Redaction,' p. 300. See also F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 102.

²¹ J. Marcus, *Mystery*, p. 36.

issue can not be taken as an indication that ἡ διωγμοῦ in v. 17 is pre-Markan. Therefore, the conclusion drawn above on the basis of the analysis of v. 6 and v. 17, namely that ἡ διωγμοῦ in v. 17 is the result of Markan redaction, still stands.

The phrase διὰ τὸν λόγον in v. 17 may also be a Markan redactional addition. Some authors have argued that the occurrence of ὁ λόγος instead of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον in v. 17 is evidence that διὰ τὸν λόγον in v. 17 is not a Markan addition but belongs to the pre-Markan source.²² It is true that the use of ὁ λόγος for ‘the gospel,’ ‘the preaching of Jesus,’ ‘the Christian message’ is common in the early Christian tradition, and therefore cannot be regarded as specifically Markan. Yet, elsewhere in Mark we find ὁ λόγος for ‘the gospel’ in indisputably redactional passages.²³

Whether διὰ τὸν λόγον belonged to Mark’s source or was introduced by the evangelist along with ἡ διωγμοῦ is hard to decide. There is no compelling reason to deny διὰ τὸν λόγον to Mark and to assign it to his source, nor is the phrase typically Markan. This question can, however, be left undecided here. The following word εὐθύς, in any case, is a Markan favourite term and almost certainly a Markan insertion.

The conclusion must be that in v. 17 not only καί ... εἰσιν but also ἡ διωγμοῦ and εὐθύς, and perhaps διὰ τὸν λόγον, must be regarded as Markan redaction.²⁴ Thus Mark expanded the tradition known to him by elaborating the persecution theme. The revisions of the traditional material indicate that the evangelist had a special interest in the subject of the persecution of Christians. It is likely that, in expanding

²² E.g., J. Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, Göttingen, 1970*, pp. 75-76; H. Räisänen, *Die Parabeltheorie im Markusevangelium* (SFEG 26), Helsinki, 1973, p. 73 note 10.

²³ See J.K. Elliott, ‘Mark and the Teaching of Jesus. An Examination of λόγος and εὐαγγέλιον,’ in W.L. Petersen, J.S. Vos, H.J. de Jonge (edd.), *Sayings of Jesus. Canonical and Non-canonical* (FS T. Baarda) (Supplements to NT 89), Leiden, 1997, pp. 37-45, esp. pp. 39-41. Elliott mentions Mk 1:45, 2:2, and 4:33 (if λόγος is the original reading); for my view on the meaning of λόγος in Mk 1:45, see p. 182 note 41. With regard to λόγος in Mk 8:32, Elliott rightly argues that it refers to the prediction of suffering in v. 31. Consequently, he takes it to mean ‘that utterance,’ not ‘the gospel’ (see pp. 38-39).

²⁴ The words ἡ διωγμοῦ διὰ τὸν λόγον are considered the result of Markan redaction by, e.g., J. Dupont, ‘La parabole du semeur,’ pp. 249-250; J. Lambrecht, ‘Redaction,’ p. 301; H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 120.

the traditional material as he did, Mark was adapting the message of his source to the situation of his day.²⁵

This conclusion is, in my view, corroborated by the fact that the overall purport of Mk 4:1-34 is to encourage the readers. In the parable of the sower and its explanation, Mk 4:1-20, Mark implicitly exhorts his readers not to fall away under the pressure of 'trouble or persecution,' 'cares of the world' or 'the lure of wealth,' but to remain faithful to the gospel and prove to be 'good soil.'²⁶ The following verses, Mk 4:21-25, are also intended to offer encouragement. There seems to be general agreement that the Markan redactor is responsible for combining the four originally independent sayings in vv. 21-25 and for placing them in their present context.²⁷ In Mk 4:21-23 the evangelist assures his readers that the gospel will not fade away. By inserting Mk 4:24-25, Mark adds a clear reminder to his readers that only those who pay attention to the gospel and remain faithful to it will be saved.²⁸ Finally, the two pre-Markan 'seed parables' (Mk 4:26-32) assure Mark's readers that, even though they may not notice it yet, God's kingdom is certainly coming.

In other words, in Mk 4:1-25 the evangelist expands the traditional material known to him to address the situation of his readers who, he believes, are suffering persecution. Mark incites his readers to resist temptations and endure hardships, to remain faithful to their belief; he assures them that they will be rewarded for their perseverance. Apparently, the persecution of Christians played a part in the consciousness of the evangelist.

²⁵ See also J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, pp. 290-291 and 312; J. Dupont, 'La parabole du semeur,' p. 251; idem, 'La parabole de la semence qui pousse toute seule (Mc 4,26-29),' in F. Neirynck (ed.), *Études sur les Évangiles synoptiques I* (BETL 70A), Leuven, 1985, pp. 295-320, esp. pp. 316-317.

²⁶ See also J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 313; cf. R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. 225.

²⁷ See R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium I*, pp. 227 and 247; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I*, p. 178; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 81; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. 227; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 315; J. Dupont, 'Marc 4,21-25 et Q,' p. 284; R. Laufen, *Die Doppelüberlieferungen der Logienquelle und des Markusevangeliums*, Königstein-Ts./Bonn, 1980, pp. 165-166.

²⁸ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium I*, pp. 251 and 254; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I*, p. 176 and 180-181; R. Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, p. 173.

2. Mk 8:34-35

The second passage that needs to be discussed here is Mk 8:34-35. These verses are part of a larger section which starts in Mk 8:27 and runs to Mk 9:1.²⁹ Within Mk 8:27-9:1, three smaller units can be discerned: Mk 8:27-30 on Peter's confession, Mk 8:31-33 on Jesus' prediction of his passion, and Mk 8:34-9:1 on losing one's life for the sake of Jesus and the gospel.

The first unit, Mk 8:27-30, opens with the question of Jesus' identity. Jesus asks his disciples who the people think he is (v. 27), and, subsequently, who they themselves think he is (v. 29). Peter professes him as the Christ (v. 29), but Jesus tells the disciples not to speak of him (v. 30).

In the second unit, Mk 8:31-33, the evangelist has Jesus foretell his own death and resurrection (v. 31), and rebuke Peter for opposing God's plan, which includes Jesus' suffering and death (vv. 32-33).

In the third unit, Mk 8:34-9:1, Mark's Jesus adds that not only he himself will be required to suffer. Also those who follow him will suffer persecution (v. 34). Whoever of Jesus' followers is prepared to die for Jesus' sake and for the sake of the gospel will 'save' his own life (v. 35), for the Son of Man will take his side at the Last Judgement. But anyone who is not prepared to die for the sake of Jesus and the gospel will be renounced by the Son of Man 'when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' (v. 38).

The passage is concluded by the assurance that this judgement, which will take place at the final breakthrough of God's kingdom, will come soon: at least some of the hearers will still be alive to see God's kingdom come (Mk 9:1).

In this section I will argue that the idea of losing one's life for the sake of the gospel as expressed in Mk 8:34-35 was of special interest to the Markan redactor. In my view, the redactional elements in these verses serve the redactor's purpose of addressing the situation of his readers who suffer persecution because of their belief in Jesus.

The whole of Mk 8:34-38 shows both vestiges of traditional material and signs of adaptation by the Markan redactor. In composing the

²⁹ In Mk 8:27 the evangelist has Jesus and his disciples go to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Mk 9:2 depicts a new setting and is, therefore, the introduction to a new section.

section vv. 34-38, Mark made use of traditional sayings. This is evident from the existence of Q parallels for v. 34b (εἴ τις ... ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι) and v. 38. The phrase 'if anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me' in v. 34b has a parallel in Q 14:27.³⁰ And the warning that at the Last Judgement the Son of Man will not intercede for those who renounce Jesus and the gospel in v. 38 has a parallel in Q 12:8-9.³¹

However, in Q these parallels to v. 34b and v. 38 appear separately and are embedded in contexts different from Mark's. Therefore the question arises of whether the sayings in v. 34b and v. 38 traditionally belonged together and got separated from each other in Q, or whether Mark linked sayings that were traditionally separate in a new context. The second option seems to be the more plausible. The two sayings seem to fit in their distinct contexts in Q much more easily than they do in Mk 8:34-38.

The parallel to Mk 8:34 in Q 14:27 is part of a double saying of which the first half (Q 14:26) does not appear in the immediate context of Mk 8:34.³² In terms of content and structure, the first half of the saying, in Q 14:26, corresponds perfectly with the second part in Q 14:27. As for Mk 8:38, the parallel to this verse in Q 12:8-9 belongs to a passage about the coming of the kingdom of God and the Last Judgement (Q 12:2-9).³³ In that context, the verses Q 12:8-9 seem to fit harmoniously. In Mk 8:34-38, however, the connection between the traditional sayings in v. 34 and v. 38 depends completely upon vv. 35-37, for v. 34 and v. 38 in themselves have no related meaning or common topic. They are held together by the intermedi-

³⁰ Matthew and Luke both present the saying twice, once in their revision of Mk 8:34-9:1 in Mt 16:24 and Lk 9:23, and once as part of a double saying in Mt 10:38 and Lk 14:27. In Mark's Gospel, this double saying occurs as two separate sayings, Mk 8:34 and 10:29. The connection of the two sayings in Mt 10:37-38 and Lk 14:26-27 proves that at this point Matthew and Luke were using a source different from Mark's Gospel. Therefore it is justified to suppose the existence of a Q parallel to Mk 8:34, namely Q 14:27.

³¹ Matthew and Luke both present the saying twice, once in their revision of Mk 8:34-9:1 in Mt 16:27 (considerably revised) and Lk 9:26, and once as part of a larger section (Mt 10:26-33; Lk 12:2-9) in the form of a double saying in Mt 10:32-33 and Lk 12:8-9. The fact that, unlike Mark, both Matthew (in Mt 10:32-33) and Luke (in Lk 12:8-9) know this as a double saying proves that at this point Matthew and Luke were using a source different from Mark's Gospel. Therefore it is justified to suppose the existence of a Q parallel to Mk 8:38, namely Q 12:8-9.

³² The first half of this saying in Q 14:26 has a parallel in Mk 10:29.

³³ Q 12:2-9 is preserved in the same order in Lk 12:2-9 and in Mt 10:26-33.

ate verses, which should, in my view, be ascribed to the Markan redactor.

There are no Q parallels to v. 36 and v. 37, and the reconstruction of a Q parallel to v. 35 has proved to be problematic; it will be argued below that the existence of a Q parallel to v. 35 is, in fact, highly improbable. Moreover, vv. 35-37 demonstrate some features that can be regarded as typical of Mark's redactional style. The parallel structure of v. 35a and b, and of the double question in v. 36 and v. 37, and the repetition of words and phrases (σφζω v. 35a-b; τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ v. 35a-b and vv. 36-37; ἀπολέσει v. 35a-b; τί γάρ ... ἄνθρωπος vv. 36-37) are all examples of the duality characteristic of Mark's style.³⁴ This justifies the conclusion that vv. 35-37, and therefore the transition between v. 34 and v. 38, should be ascribed to the Markan redactor.

To summarize, in composing vv. 34-38 Mark used traditional material, i.e. in v. 34 and v. 38, but he himself was responsible for bringing together the traditional sayings of v. 34 and v. 38 in one context.³⁵

Let us now take a closer look at vv. 34-35. In v. 34 Jesus exhorts the crowd and the disciples, saying: 'If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For he who wants to save his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will save it.'

The introduction καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς in v. 34 is certainly due to Markan redaction. Expressions similar to καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος ... εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, serving as introductions to direct speech, are found elsewhere in Mark in clearly redactional contexts.³⁶ Furthermore, the description of Jesus' audience with the double expression τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ is a striking instance of the duality typical of Mark's style.³⁷

For v. 34b εἴ τις ... ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι, however, Mark uses tradi-

³⁴ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, e.g., p. 126 and p. 134.

³⁵ See also J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus II*, p. 22; against J. Schüling, *Studien zum Verhältnis von Logienquelle und Markusevangelium* (FzB 65), Würzburg, 1991, pp. 147-150.

³⁶ See Mk 3:23; 7:14; 8:1; 10:42; 12:43. See P. Dschulnigg, *Sprache*, p. 105.

³⁷ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, pp. 108-109.

tional material. This is evident from the fact that there is a Q parallel to this verse in Lk 14:27/Mt 10:38. To obtain a clearer picture of the Markan redactional elements in Mk 8:34b, I will now try to reconstruct the Q text, and compare it to the Markan parallel.

The texts of Matthew and Luke run as follows:

Mt 10:38	Lk 14:27
καὶ ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει	ὅστις οὐ βαστάζει
τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ	τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ
καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου,	καὶ ἔρχεται ὀπίσω μου,
οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος. ³⁸	οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής. ³⁹

The connective καί at the beginning of Mt 10:38 is probably due to Matthew's redaction. Luke tends to avoid asyndeton, and therefore the lack of a connective in his text probably reflects his source.⁴⁰

Matthew's ὃς is probably taken from Q. Matthew strongly prefers ὅστις and is unlikely to have written ὃς if he had found ὅστις in Q.⁴¹ Luke however often uses ὅστις redactionally and might have altered Q's ὃς into ὅστις to give the phrase a more general meaning.⁴² "Ὅστις is also stylistically an improvement on ὃς."⁴³

Whether Q read λαμβάνει or βαστάζει is more difficult to decide. Luke uses βαστάζω five times in his Gospel and four times in Acts. In two instances in Luke's Gospel, Lk 7:14 and 11:27, βαστάζω is used in the context of so-called Lukan *Sondergut*, and in one instance, in Lk 10:4, in the context of Q material, where Matthew has a different verb. The verb βαστάζω, 'to take up,' 'to bear,' is

³⁸ The reading μαθητής in lieu of ἄξιος in c k and Cyprian is best explained as due to influence from Lk 14:27. The reading ἀδελφός in Clement of Alexandria seems to be the result of influence from such passages as Mk 3:34-35 and parallels.

³⁹ The omission of Lk 14:27 in several witnesses is probably due to homoioteleuton. Καὶ preceding ὅστις is due to influence from Mt 10:38 or to a scribe's revision of Luke's asyndeton. The reading αὐτοῦ instead of ἑαυτοῦ may be due to Matthean influence (Mt 10:38).

⁴⁰ See J.C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, pp. 137-138; H.J. Cadbury, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke* (HTS 4), Cambridge, 1920, pp.147-148; H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q. A Study of the Overlap Texts* (BETL 122), Leuven, 1995, p. 135 and note 2.

⁴¹ Matthew uses ὃς redactionally only in 6:8; 10:27; 19:11; 20:15. See also H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, p. 136; S. Schulz, *Q. Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*, Zürich, 1972, pp. 430-431.

⁴² Luke uses ὅστις redactionally in 1:20; 2:4, 10; 7:37; 8:3, 26; 9:30; 10:42; 12:1; 15:7; 23:55.

⁴³ See also R. Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, p. 303.

more expressive, less insipid in meaning compared to the quite general λαμβάνω. Thus changing λαμβάνω into βαστάζω constitutes a stylistic improvement. It is possible, therefore, that in Lk 14:27 Luke altered the form of λαμβάνω he found in Q to a form of βαστάζω.⁴⁴ Matthew had no reason to avoid the word βαστάζω if he found it in his source, for he himself uses βαστάζω three times, all redactionally. Therefore, βαστάζω probably reflects Lukan redaction, and Q, like Matthew, read a form of λαμβάνω, probably λαμβάνει.

Luke's ἐαυτοῦ is probably redactional, for he frequently does use the word ἐαυτοῦ redactionally, and probably also changed Q's αὐτῆς into ἐαυτῆς in Lk 13:34.⁴⁵ Matthew too uses ἐαυτοῦ redactionally and therefore would have had no reason to avoid it if he found it in Q.

The question of whether Q read ἀκολουθεῖ as in Mt 10:38 or ἔρχεται as in Lk 14:27 is more difficult to decide. I assume that both Mk 8:34 and Q 14:27 originally used a form of the verb ἀκολουθεῖν, for the following reasons.

In Mk 8:34 both ἀκολουθεῖν and ἐλθεῖν are well attested in the manuscripts. The phrase ἀκολουθεῖν ὀπίσω, however, is not common in Greek.⁴⁶ In Mk 8:34, then, the phrase ἀκολουθεῖν ὀπίσω is the *lectio difficilior* and, therefore, likely to be original. In rewriting Mk 8:34 both Matthew, in Mt 16:24, and Luke, in Lk 9:23, independently altered ἀκολουθεῖν ὀπίσω to a form of the more common expression ἔρχομαι ὀπίσω.⁴⁷ Influence of the synoptic parallels can account for the alternative reading ἐλθεῖν in Mk 8:34 in many manuscripts. The conclusion that ἀκολουθεῖν is the original reading of Mk 8:34 is corroborated by the fact that the same verb appears at the end of the verse. Repetition of the same word or phrase is a form of duality typical of Mark's style.⁴⁸

Similar arguments can be given for the reading ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω

⁴⁴ See also S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 431; R. Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, p. 303.

⁴⁵ If in Lk 13:19 the correct reading is ἐαυτοῦ, and in Lk 19:36 ἐαυτῶν, these are further instances of Luke changing αὐτοῦ into ἐαυτοῦ. See also S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 431; R. Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, p. 303 and note 11.

⁴⁶ LSJ register as common constructions ἀκολουθεῖω + dative, and + prepositions μέτα, σύν, and κατόπιν; rarely + accusative, and + ἐπί.

⁴⁷ Undoubtedly, Matthew and Luke acted independently, for Lk 9:23 has ἔρχεσθαι and Mt 16:24 ἐλθεῖν.

⁴⁸ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 77-82. Neirynck does not mention Mk 8:34 in this list for he follows the reading ἐλθεῖν, cf. p. 163.

in Q 14:27. If the above argument for ἀκολουθεῖν in Mk 8:34 is right, Matthew changed the un-Greek expression ἀκολουθεῖν ὀπίσω in Mk 8:34 into the more common ἐλθεῖν ὀπίσω in rewriting this verse in Mt 16:24. It is very unlikely, then, that Matthew did the opposite, that is, changed ἔρχεται into ἀκολουθεῖ, in his redaction of Q 14:27. Therefore, ἀκολουθεῖ in Mt 10:38 probably reflects the reading of Q.⁴⁹ Luke altered the grating expression ἀκολουθεῖν ὀπίσω of the tradition both in his redaction of Mk 8:34 in Lk 9:23 and in his redaction of Q in Lk 14:27.

The closing phrase οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής in Lk 14:27 has a good probability of reflecting the original Q text. Matthew's οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος seems an attempt to adapt the saying to the actual situation of his readers. Writing for a Christian community, he may have thought that all his readers were already disciples of Jesus. For them there could no longer be any question of whether they would or would not be disciples. The question was whether they were, or were not *good* disciples, that is, disciples worthy of Jesus. Matthew's text can, therefore, be regarded as secondary compared to the Lukan version.⁵⁰

This, then, is my reconstruction of Q 14:27:⁵¹

ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει
τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ
καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου
οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής.

There is no reason to suppose that Mk 8:34b is dependent on Q 14:27, nor the other way around, for there are no elements in the Q text that need to be accounted for as due to Markan redaction, nor are there any elements in Mark that must be regarded as dependent on Q's redaction of the saying. Mark and Q go back independently to a common tradition.⁵²

⁴⁹ See also S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 430; against, e.g., J. Schüling, *Logienquelle und Markusevangelium*, p. 137; R. Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, p. 303.

⁵⁰ See also S. Schulz, *Q*, pp. 430 and 447; R. Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, pp. 303-304.

⁵¹ The same reconstruction is found in J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S. Kloppenborg (edd.), *The Critical Edition of Q. Synopsis including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas, with English, German, and French Translation of Q and Thomas*, Leuven, 2000, pp. 454-455.

⁵² Against J. Lambrecht, 'Q-Influence on Mark 8:34-9:1,' in J. Delobel (ed.), *Logia. Les paroles de Jésus—The Sayings of Jesus* (FS J. Coppens) (BETL 59), Leuven, 1982, pp. 277-304,

The comparison of Mk 8:34b and Q 14:27 shows that common tradition accounts for the elements ‘whoever,’ ὅπισω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, and τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ with a verb of ‘taking up’ in Mk 8:34b. The phrase ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν in Mark has no equivalent in Q, and is probably due to Markan redaction. The phrases ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν and ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ are of similar import, and can be regarded as an example of duality typical of Mark’s style.⁵³ Moreover, the verb ἀπαρνέομαι seems to have a Markan flavour.⁵⁴ The phrase καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι is also due to Markan redaction, since Mark usually uses ἀκολουθεῖν with the dative, not with ὀπίσω or another preposition, as he still did in the first half of the saying. Moreover, repetition of the same word within a short distance is characteristic of Mark’s style.

In sum, the comparison of Mk 8:34 and its parallel in Q 14:27 shows that in Mk 8:34 the evangelist elaborated a traditional saying by expanding the element of the suffering of Jesus’ followers.

There is no agreement among scholars as to whether Q contained a parallel to Mk 8:35.⁵⁵ Both Matthew and Luke have the saying of Mk 8:35 twice. Both rewrite the whole of Mk 8:34-9:1, Matthew in 16:24-28 and Luke in 9:23-27,⁵⁶ and both Matthew and Luke also use the saying in a different context, Matthew in 10:39 and Luke in 17:33.

Jan Lambrecht argues that the fact that ‘both Matthew and Luke should have made the same addition from Mark each in the context of Q material’ in Mt 10:39 and Lk 17:33 is remarkable and indicates that a parallel of this saying must have existed in Q.⁵⁷ This argument

esp. p. 285, and H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, pp. 133-141 who argue that Mk 8:34b is dependent on Q 14:27.

⁵³ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 103.

⁵⁴ The verb ἀπαρνέομαι occurs only once in the New Testament outside Mark’s influence, see P. Dschulnigg, *Sprache*, p. 149.

⁵⁵ See also J. Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, Regensburg, 1955, p. 277; J. Zmijewski, *Die Eschatologiereden des Lukas-Evangeliums. Eine traditions- und redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zu Lk 21,5-36 und Lk 17,20-37* (BBB 49), Bonn, 1972, pp. 479-482; F. Neirynck, ‘Recent Developments in the Study of Q,’ in F. Van Segbroeck (ed.), *Evangelica II* (BETL 99), Leuven, 1991, pp. 409-461, esp. pp. 429-431 and note 94. Doubts about the existence of a Q saying behind Lk 17:33/Mt 10:39 are expressed by J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S. Kloppenborg (edd.), *Critical Edition of Q*, p. 456 note 1.

⁵⁶ Parallel to Mk 8:35: Mt 16:25 and Lk 9:24.

⁵⁷ J. Lambrecht, ‘Q-Influence,’ p. 283, quoting I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke. A Com-*

for a Q parallel, however, is weak. Matthew and Luke do both use this saying in a context of Q material, but this context is entirely different in each case.

Moreover, the fact that both Matthew and Luke use the same saying twice is not necessarily an indication of the existence of a Q parallel. In Lk 17:25, thus in the immediate context of Lk 17:33, Luke uses another verse from Mark, namely Mk 8:31, that he had used before, in Lk 9:22, in rewriting the whole of Mk 8:27-9:1. This instance is highly instructive for two reasons. First, the prediction of Jesus' death in Mk 8:31 is definitely Markan redaction. Consequently, the appearance of a parallel in Lk 9:22 and 17:33 shows that Luke may use Markan material twice.⁵⁸ The fact that Luke has a saying twice is not always proof of the existence of a Q parallel. Secondly, if Luke wrote Lk 17:25 with Mk 8:31 in mind, it is very possible that he wrote Lk 17:33 with Mk 8:35 in mind.

The occurrence of the saying in Mt 10:39 can also best be explained as due to influence from Mk 8:35. Mt 10:37-38 contains a double saying from Q. The second half of this saying, Mt 10:38, is parallel to Mk 8:34. Writing with the Markan parallel in mind, Matthew added a version of Mark's ensuing verse, Mk 8:35, to his verse Mt 10:38.⁵⁹

There are some other good reasons to suppose that Mt 10:39 and Lk 17:33 are not taken from Q, but are simply rewritings of Mk 8:35.⁶⁰

If we compare Mk 8:35 to its parallel in Lk 17:33, we can make the following observations. Instead of Mark's θέλη ... σῶσαι ... σώσει, Luke has ζητήση ... περιποιήσασθαι ... ζωογονήσει. These differences between Luke and Mark can be understood as the result of Lukan redaction. The use of ζητέω should not be seen—as those who advocate a Q parallel would maintain—as the counterpart of Matthew's εὕρισκω in Mt 10:39, but as the Lukan equivalent of Mark's θέλω in Mk 8:35. For Luke, θέλω and ζητέω are synonyms. Frans Neirynck quotes Lk 9:9 and 23:8b to demonstrate that ζητέω

mentary on the Greek Text, Exeter, 1978, p. 666. A similar argument is found in R. Laufen, *Doppelüberlieferungen*, p. 318.

⁵⁸ See also F. Neirynck, 'Study of Q,' p. 430.

⁵⁹ See also J. Zmijewski, *Eschatologiereden*, p. 480; F. Neirynck, 'Study of Q,' p. 431.

⁶⁰ Similar arguments are used by F. Neirynck, 'Study of Q,' pp. 429-430.

with infinitive and θέλω with infinitive are indeed synonymous phrases.⁶¹ Moreover, the occurrence of the verb εὕρισκω in Mt 10:39 is likely to be the result of Matthean redaction, for Matthew also changes the σώσει of Mk 8:35b into εὕρήσει in Mt 16:25. Both the verbs περιποιέομαι and ζωογονέω in Lk 17:33 can be ascribed to Luke, for this evangelist has a preference for compound verbs⁶² and usually avoids repetition of the same word in his redaction of Mark.⁶³

The fact that the second τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ of Mk 8:35 does not appear in Lk 17:33b is due to Luke's tendency to avoid repetition. The omission of Mark's ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in Lk 17:33 is understandable in the context of this verse.⁶⁴ In Lk 17:22-35 the evangelist gives an account of how the coming of the Son of Man will come about. He first compares it with the time of Noah, and subsequently with that of Lot. On the day that the Son of Man is revealed, 'anyone on the housetop who has belongings in the house must not come down to take them away; and likewise anyone in the field must not turn back.' What happened to Lot's wife must serve as a warning. One should not cling to the old life, in order not to forfeit one's part in the coming age, for some will have a share in it, others will not. The message of this passage is not that one should be afraid of losing one's life for the sake of Jesus, the gospel or faith. It is rather that one must not cling to one's former life, but be prepared to give it up at the moment the Son of Man is revealed. The phrase ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is no longer fitting in this context and is consequently omitted by Luke in Lk 17:33.⁶⁵

In other words, Lk 17:33 is completely understandable as a rewriting of Mk 8:35. In fact, Mt 10:39 too can be fully understood as a rewriting of Mark.

⁶¹ F. Neirynck, 'Study of Q,' p. 429.

⁶² See H.J. Cadbury, *Style*, p. 166: 'Luke's changes in Mark indicate the same preference for compound verbs that is revealed both by a comparison of the passages derived from Q and by the general ration of simple to compound verbs.'

⁶³ See H.J. Cadbury, *Style*, p. 85: 'sometimes repetition is avoided by the insertion of a synonym for the repeated word ...' as in Lk 18:38; 21:2; 22:45; 23:46.

⁶⁴ See also J. Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 277; against J. Lambrecht, 'Q-Influence,' p. 283. Lambrecht wrongly considers the omission of καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου of Mk 8:35b in both Lk 17:33 and Mt 10:39 an indication that there was a Q parallel to Mk 8:35. The noun εὐαγγέλιον, however, is characteristic of Mark, and is also omitted in the rewriting of Mk 8:35 in Lk 9:24 and Mt 16:25.

⁶⁵ See also J. Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 277.

If we compare Mk 8:35 to its parallel in Mt 10:39, we can make the following observations. Mark's phrase ὅς ... ἐὰν θέλῃ ... σῶσαι has an equivalent in Matthew's ὁ εὐρών, Mark's ὅς ... ἂν ἀπολέσει in Matthew's ὁ ἀπολέσας, and Mark's σώσει in Matthew's εὐρήσει. These differences between Mk 8:35 and Mt 10:39 can all be ascribed to Matthew's redaction.

Contrary to what Lambrecht supposes, the participle constructions ὁ εὐρών and ὁ ἀπολέσας do not reflect a Q text.⁶⁶ They are clearly the result of Matthew's attempt to fit the saying into its context. In Mt 10:37-42, Matthew repeatedly structures his phrases by means of participle constructions (ὁ φιλῶν v. 37 twice; ὁ εὐρών v. 39; ὁ ἀπολέσας v. 39; ὁ δεχόμενος v. 40 twice; ὁ δεχόμενος v. 41 twice). Furthermore, as has already been said, the appearance of the verb εὐρίσκω in Mt 10:39 is likely to be the result of Matthean redaction, for Matthew also changes σώσει of Mk 8:35b into εὐρήσει in Mt 16:25.

To summarize, both Lk 17:33 and Mt 10:39 can be understood as a rewriting of Mk 8:35. There is no reason to postulate a Q tradition of the saying. The saying in Mk 8:35 is to be ascribed to Mark.

Here, a few more words need to be said about Mk 8:35 itself. The Markan style of this verse strongly suggests that it is of Markan origin. The strictly parallel structure of the sentence and the repetition of words are characteristic of Mark's style. The double expression ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is no less typically Markan. Moreover, as mentioned before, εὐαγγέλιον is a Markan favourite term. Mark's use of the twofold phrase ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, instead of a simple ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ, was certainly motivated by his intention to ensure that the saying should be applicable not only to the audience of Jesus, but also to his own contemporaries.⁶⁷ Strictly speaking, after Jesus' death, dying for his sake is no longer a real option; dying for his message, however, is. The Markan redactor shows the same tendency in Mk 8:38, where he expands με with καὶ τοὺς ἐμούς λόγους.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ J. Lambrecht, 'Q-Influence,' p. 283.

⁶⁷ Cf. R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 62; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁸ H.J. de Jonge, 'The Sayings on Confessing and Denying Jesus in Q 12:8-9 and Mark 8:38,' in W.L. Petersen, J.S. Vos, H.J. de Jonge (edd.), *Sayings of Jesus. Canonical and Non-Canonical* (FS T. Baarda) (Supplements to NT 89), Leiden, 1997, pp. 105-121, esp. pp. 117-

All in all, it must be concluded that Mk 8:34-35 shows vestiges of traditional material as well as signs of Markan redactional adaptation. In writing these verses, Mark used a traditional saying, reflected in v. 34. He elaborated this traditional saying and added v. 35, thus expanding the element of Christians suffering because of their belief in Jesus. Moreover, Mark made the traditional saying applicable to the situation of his readers by mentioning explicitly the idea of suffering for the sake of the gospel (v. 35 καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου). Mark's elaboration and additions are best explained as the result of his concern about the situation of his readers. It is likely, therefore, that suffering because of the gospel is a reality with which the Markan Christians were confronted.

This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that the whole of the Markan redactional composition Mk 8:34-9:1 is exhortative in tone.⁶⁹ Whoever is willing to lose his life because of his belief in Jesus and the gospel, it is promised, will be saved at the time of judgement, when the Son of Man 'comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' (vv. 35-38). However, if anyone renounces Jesus and the gospel, he will be condemned (v. 38). And he should be aware that the end is near (Mk 9:1).

In sum, in composing Mk 8:34-9:1 the evangelist elaborates the traditional material known to him in such a way that it serves his purpose, his intention to incite and exhort his readers to hold firm to their belief even though this may cost them their lives. Apparently Mark's readers faced persecution and ran the risk of losing their lives because of their belief.

3. Mk 10:29-30

Mark's third reference to the persecution of Christians occurs in Mk 10:29-30. These verses are part of a larger section, Mk 10:17-31, which consists of three smaller units: Mk 10:17-22 on Jesus' encounter with the rich man, Mk 10:23-27 on wealth as an impediment to entering God's kingdom, and Mk 10:28-31 on the rewards of discipleship.⁷⁰

118. The omission of λόγους in $\mathcal{P}^{45\text{vid}}$ W k sa and Tertullian is probably due to homoioteleuton.

⁶⁹ See also, e.g., R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 65.

⁷⁰ See also R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 552; R. Busemann, *Die Jüngergemeinde nach Markus*

In Mk 10:17-22 the evangelist relates that Jesus is approached by a man who asks him 'what he must do to inherit eternal life' (v. 17). Jesus answers that he must keep the Commandments (v. 19). When the man replies that he has done so since he was a child (v. 20), Jesus says: 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' (v. 21). But the man is shocked and goes home sadly, for he is a rich man (v. 22).

In the following units, Mk 10:23-27 and 10:28-31, a conversation takes place between Jesus and the disciples. First, in vv. 23-27, Mark has Jesus state that it is hard for the wealthy to be saved. 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God' (v. 25). Then, in vv. 28-31, Peter remarks that they, the disciples,—in contrast to the rich man—have left everything behind and followed Jesus (v. 28). Jesus answers with the comforting assurance that 'there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, who will not receive a hundred-fold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life' (vv. 29-30). Mark's Jesus concludes by remarking that 'many who are first will be last, and the last will be first' (v. 31).

The passage that interests us now is Mk 10:29-30. In these verses Mark is alluding to the situation of people who in becoming Christians run the risk of losing their possessions and family relationships, and, on top of that, have to face hostility and persecution. I wish to argue here that Mark's redactional activity in Mk 10:29-30 shows that he had a special interest in the persecution of Christians, and extended the traditional material available to him with a view to the actual situation of his contemporary readers.

Mk 10:29-30 shows vestiges of tradition as well as redaction. Undoubtedly, Mark used traditional material in composing Jesus' saying

10. *Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung des 10. Kapitels im Markusevangelium* (BBB 57), Königstein-Ts./Bonn, 1983, pp. 64-65; cf. R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 144; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 173-174. Against J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 91, who maintains that Mk 10:28-31 introduces a new topic and is only loosely connected with the preceding section (Mk 10:17-27).

on losing one's home and family in v. 29. This is clear from the fact that there is a parallel to this saying in Q, transmitted in Lk 14:26/Mt 10:37.

Lk 14:26 and Mt 10:37 have indeed to be taken as witnesses of a Q version of this saying. Both Luke and Matthew present the saying twice, once in their revision of Mk 10:29-30 in Lk 18:29-30 and Mt 19:29, and once in connection with the saying on taking up one's cross in following Jesus in Lk 14:26 and Mt 10:37. In Lk 14:26 and Mt 10:37, then, the saying is part of a larger unit, i.e. Lk 14:26-27 and Mt 10:37-38. In Mark's Gospel the two parts of this larger unit appear as two separate sayings: the saying on taking up one's cross in Mk 8:34, and the saying on losing one's home and family in Mk 10:29. The connection of the two sayings in Lk 14:26-27 and Mt 10:37-38 proves that at this point Luke and Matthew were using a source different from Mark's Gospel. It is therefore justified to suppose the existence of a Q parallel to Mk 10:29, namely Q 14:26.

In order to gain a clearer insight into the Markan redaction of Mk 10:29-30, I will first try to establish the textual form of Q 14:26, and will subsequently compare Q 14:26 with its parallel in Mk 10:29-30.

This is how the double saying runs in Mt 10:37-38 and Lk 14:26-27:

Mt 10:37-38	Lk 14:26-27
37	26
ὁ φιλῶν	εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς με
πατέρα ἢ μητέρα	καὶ οὐ μισεῖ
ὑπὲρ ἐμὲ	τὸν πατέρα ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα
	καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα
	καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τὰς ἀδελφάς
	ἔτι τε καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ,
οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος,	οὐ δύναται εἶναι μου μαθητής.
καὶ ὁ φιλῶν	
υἱὸν ἢ θυγατέρα	
ὑπὲρ ἐμὲ	
οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος	
38	27
καὶ ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει	ὅστις οὐ βαστάζει

τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ	τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ
καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ	καὶ ἔρχεται
ὀπίσω μου,	ὀπίσω μου,
οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος.	οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής.

First of all, it should be noted that the composition of the saying in Luke differs considerably from Matthew's version. The substantival participles in Mt 10:37, however, are certainly due to Matthew's redaction, for in Mt 10:37-42 the evangelist uses a whole series of substantival participles in order to impose stylistic unity on a number of traditional sayings collected here.⁷¹ Therefore, the conditional clause in Lk 14:26 should be regarded as the more original construction and the one likely to reflect the Q reading.

It is difficult to decide whether Q 14:26 used the phrase φιλέω ὑπὲρ ἐμέ like Matthew, or οὐ μισέω like Luke. One may argue that it is more likely that Matthew softened the very sharp phrase οὐ μισέω, altering it to the more friendly φιλέω ὑπὲρ ἐμέ, than that Luke made a change the other way around. Then Luke's οὐ μισεῖ has a better chance of being the original reading of Q 14:26.⁷²

In the preceding section I have already argued that the closing phrase οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής in Lk 14:27 has a good probability of reflecting the original Q text, while Matthew's οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος in Mt 10:38 seems an attempt to adapt the saying to the actual situation of his readers.⁷³ For the same reason Luke's οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής in Lk 14:26 is more likely to reflect Q than Matthew's οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος in Mt 10:37.

In short, Lk 14:26 seems to preserve the Q form of the saying more faithfully than Mt 10:37. Matthew's version reflects an attempt to make the saying fit more easily into his composition and adapt it to the situation of his readers.

Next it is to be considered whether the list of family members and goods in Q 14:26 was reduced by Matthew, or expanded by Luke through the addition of elements from Mk 10:29-30. There can be little doubt, in my view, that the Lukan version is closer to the Q text

⁷¹ See also H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, p. 142. See also above, p. 45.

⁷² See S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 446; J. Schüling, *Logienquelle und Markusevangelium*, p. 145; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 176.

⁷³ See above, p. 41. See also S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 447.

than is the version by Matthew.

Matthew and Luke each have the saying twice, once from Q (Mt 10:37/Lk 14:26) and once from Mk 10:29-30 (Mt 19:29/Lk 18:29-30). In Lk 18:29 the Lukan redactor reduces the number of family members and goods mentioned in Mk 10:29 by using inclusive terms. The phrase πατέρα ἢ μητέρα is replaced by γονεῖς, and ἀδελφούς ἢ ἀδελφάς by ἀδελφούς. The word ἀγρούς is left out completely.⁷⁴ In Lk 14:26, however, Luke has the double phrases τὸν πατέρα καὶ μητέρα, and τοὺς ἀδελφούς καὶ τὰς ἀδελφάς, which he shortened in his rewriting of Mark in Lk 18:29. It is unlikely that Luke would have reduced Mark's longer list to a shorter equivalent in Lk 18:29, and at the same time inserted Mark's longer phrases into a shorter Q text in Lk 14:26.

Matthew, on the other hand, is likely to have shortened the longer list in Q, in order to make the saying fit more easily into his composition.⁷⁵ Matthew preserves the full list of family members and goods in his revision of Mk 10:29 in Mt 19:29, but mentions only πατέρα ἢ μητέρα and υἱὸν ἢ θυγατέρα in his version of Q in Mt 10:37.

It deserves note here that in Mt 10:37 the saying is part of a set of parallel sayings. Verse 37 begins with two parallel sentences followed by the saying about taking up one's cross in v. 38, which is again followed by two parallel sentences in v. 39. Subsequently, vv. 40-41 have two sets of parallel sayings, followed by a saying in v. 42 whose structure corresponds with that of the saying in v. 38 on taking up one's cross.⁷⁶ Matthew can be viewed as responsible for splitting up the single conditional clause of Q 14:26 into two parallel phrases to make the structure of his v. 37 correspond with that of his v. 39. In order to make the parallelism more conspicuous he is likely to have abridged Q's list of family members which Luke retained in Lk 14:26. Matthew took over only those family members from Q who already figured in the citation from Micah given in Mt 10:35, namely

⁷⁴ Luke may have meant to include the category of 'land' in that of the οἰκία; cf. D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 175: 'Das "Haus" (οἰκία oder οἶκος, lat. familia) ist der Oberbegriff; zu ihm gehören die, die unter einem Dach zusammen wohnen (Geschwister, Eltern, Kinder), aber auch das Land, das unter agrarischen Verhältnissen die Lebensgrundlage für die Familie bildet.'

⁷⁵ Against S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 447.

⁷⁶ The structure of vv. 37-41 is: a and a' (v. 37), b (v. 38), c and c' (v. 39), d and d' (v. 40), e and e' (v. 41), and b' (v. 42).

‘father’ and ‘mother.’ To these he added their counterparts ‘son’ and ‘daughter,’ borrowed from the Micah citation. In this way he created a perfect parallelism between v. 37a and v. 37b.

All this justifies the conclusion that the Q text contained the longer list preserved by Lk 14:26.⁷⁷ If Q 14:26 gave the longer list we now have in Luke, this would also explain why in Lk 18:29 Luke omitted Mark’s ἡ ἀδελφὰς (Mk 10:29), and replaced Mark’s μητέρα ἡ πατέρα by γονεῖς (Mk 10:29), but inserted ἡ γυναῖκα. The reason for his inserting ἡ γυναῖκα is that γυναῖκα figured in the saying as he knew it from Q (Q 14:26). This γύνη was the only element that has no equivalent in Mark’s version of the saying (Mk 10:29).

All in all, then, the longer list of family members of Lk 14:26, not the shorter enumeration of Mt 10:37, is likely to represent Q.

Reconstructing the text of Q 14:26 also requires a decision as to whether the phrase ἔτι τε (variant reading: δὲ) καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ belonged to Q. The only other instance of ἔτι τε καὶ in the New Testament is Acts 21:28. If, with a number of witnesses, one prefers the reading ἔτι δὲ καὶ in Lk 14:26, the only other instance in the New Testament is also in Acts, in this case Acts 2:26. The use of the trisyllabic form of the pronoun ἑαυτοῦ in lieu of the disyllabic form αὐτοῦ reflects Lukan usage rather than that of Q.⁷⁸ The combination of ψυχὴ with genitive possessive in the function of a reflexive pronoun occurs in Lk 21:19, where it is Lukan redaction, and in Acts 15:26.⁷⁹ There is a chance, then, that Lk 14:26 ἔτι τε/δὲ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ is a Lukan insertion.

Frans Neirynck has proposed that one should regard the insertion as inspired by Mk 8:34 ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτόν.⁸⁰ This proposal, however, is somewhat complicated. It presupposes (a) that in rewriting the double saying Q 14:26-27 Luke was reminded of the saying about

⁷⁷ Against J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S. Kloppenborg (edd.), *Critical Edition of Q*, pp. 450-453.

⁷⁸ In Luke’s Gospel ἑαυτοῦ is frequent; it occurs 60 times; in Matthew it occurs 31 times; see N. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (by J.H. Moulton) III. *Syntax*, Edinburgh, 1963, p. 42.

⁷⁹ In Lk 9:25, however, Luke alters Mark’s reflexive τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ to more normal Greek.

⁸⁰ F. Neirynck, ‘Study of Q,’ pp. 430-431. In this he follows B. Weiss, A. Schulz and A. Plummer.

the cross in Mk 8:34; (b) that he borrowed the idea of the necessity of self-denial from Mk 8:34; and (c) that he phrased this idea in terms borrowed from Mk 8:35 τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ.⁸¹ In principle, this is all possible. But it is perhaps less complicated to assume that Luke's insertion was inspired by early Christian paraenesis in general: exhortations to, and praise of, self-denial were quite common.⁸² In any case, Lk 14:26 ἔτι ... ἑαυτοῦ is likely to be a Lukan addition.⁸³

It may be concluded that Lk 14:26 is a reasonably faithful rendering of the underlying Q saying except for ἑαυτοῦ (after πατέρα) and ἔτι ... ἑαυτοῦ, which are probably Lukan redaction. The Q saying then expressed the idea that following Jesus implies disowning one's family. This conclusion enables us to compare Q 14:26 with Mk 10:29-30.

The elements Mk 10:29-30 has in common with Q 14:26 are not numerous. The words ἀδελφούς, ἀδελφάς, μητέρα, and πατέρα in Mk 10:29, and their counterparts in Mk 10:30 (ἀδελφούς, ἀδελφάς, and μητέρα), can be considered as deriving from pre-Markan tradition. But otherwise Mark's saying looks quite different from Q's. This is due, at least in part, to Mark's redactional interference in Mk 10:29-30. Let us see which elements in these verses can be identified as Markan redaction.

The introduction to the saying in Mk 10:28 can safely be regarded as Mark's own contribution to the episode.⁸⁴ The use of ἄρχομαι with a verb of speaking at the beginning of v. 28 has a definitely Markan ring.⁸⁵ The parallelism of ἀφήκαμεν ... καὶ ἠκολουθήκαμεν reflects Mark's dualistic style. Moreover, ἠκολουθήκαμέν σοι resumes ἀκολουθεῖ μοι of v. 21 in a way typical of Mark.⁸⁶

In Mk 10:29 the verb ἀφῆκεν is probably the result of Markan redaction, since it resumes ἀφήκαμεν of v. 28.⁸⁷ Repetition of the same

⁸¹ F. Neirynck does not mention presupposition (c) explicitly, but it is inevitable since there is no verbal agreement between Luke's insertion and Mk 8:34, whereas there is such agreement between the insertion and Mk 8:35.

⁸² See, e.g., 1 Thess 2:8; 2 Cor 4:11; Phil 2:30; Acts 15:26; see also 2 Cor 1:6 and Rom 9:3.

⁸³ See also S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 447; cf. J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S. Kloppenborg (edd.), *Critical Edition of Q*, pp. 450-453.

⁸⁴ See also R. Busemann, *Die Jüngergemeinde*, pp. 67-73.

⁸⁵ See P. Dschulnigg, *Sprache*, p. 182; R. Busemann, *Die Jüngergemeinde*, pp. 67-69.

⁸⁶ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 120.

⁸⁷ The same verb is used by Mark in Mk 1:18, where Simon and Andrew leave their nets,

word within a short space in the same context is a Markan redactional feature.

The phrase ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ ἕνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Mk 10:29 should be ascribed to Mark as well. Whether the words ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ are Markan or pre-Markan cannot be ascertained. They reflect something also implied by the traditional saying, for in Q 14:26 too giving up one's family is demanded of those who want to 'be my (i.e. Jesus') disciple.' However, the double expression and the use of the Markan favourite term εὐαγγέλιον betray Markan redaction.⁸⁸ Just as in Mk 8:35, the addition of ἕνεκεν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in Mk 10:29 reflects the author's attempt to relate the traditional saying to the actual situation of his readers.⁸⁹ For these readers leaving one's family behind for the sake of Jesus was no longer a real possibility, but abandoning everything for the sake of 'the gospel' was the hard reality for many who became Christians at the time when Mark wrote his Gospel.

There is, however, another even more striking difference between Mark's saying Mk 10:29-30 and its parallel Q 14:26. The parallel in Q 14:26 speaks of giving up everything and following Jesus without receiving anything in return. Mk 10:29-30, however, speaks of people who leave everything behind 'for Jesus' sake and for the sake of the gospel' and receive a new home and family. Q 14:26, then, seems to speak of giving everything up and following Jesus as the act of a wandering disciple.⁹⁰ Mk 10:29-30, however, reflects the situation of people who as a consequence of joining the Church have to abandon their families and possessions, but, unlike the followers of Jesus in Q 14:26, will receive a new social context in the form of the Christian community. This community will serve, socially and economically, as their new οἰκία. This idea that newly converted Christians will find a new social context in the Christian community is expressed in v. 30, and is likely to have been introduced by the Markan redactor.

Virtually all of v. 30 can be regarded as the result of Markan redaction.⁹¹ The list of possessions and family members in v. 30 re-

and in Mk 1:20 where James and John leave their father, their boat, and the hired men behind, in order to follow Jesus.

⁸⁸ See J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 91.

⁸⁹ See above, p. 45. Cf. R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 145.

⁹⁰ See also D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 174.

⁹¹ See also J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 91; D. Lührmann, *Markusevan-*

peats that of v. 29; such a repetition is typically Markan.⁹² Furthermore, the syntactic construction οὐδείς ἐστὶν ὅς (v. 29) ... ἐὰν μή (v. 30) ...,⁹³ is an instance of Mark's dualistic style, as are the double temporal expression νῦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ,⁹⁴ and the parallel opposition ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ ... ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ

This means that the mention of persecutions of Christians (μετὰ διωγμῶν) in v. 30 must also be due to Markan redaction.⁹⁵ This conclusion is unavoidable since both syntactically and conceptually μετὰ διωγμῶν (v. 30) is an addition to the second list of possessions and family members in v. 30. This list is, as has just been argued, Mark's repetition of the partly traditional list in v. 29. As a consequence, the phrase μετὰ διωγμῶν is also Mark's.

The above analysis has made it clear that in Mk 10:29-30 the evangelist revises traditional Christian material. The traditional saying behind Mk 10:29 spoke of leaving everything behind because of Jesus. In Mk 10:29 it is applied to the situation of people who lose their homes and family because of their joining the Christian community: as members of the Church they receive compensations for their losses, albeit with persecution. It is unclear why Mark would have revised the traditional saying if not with a view to the actual situation of his contemporary readers. If so, the above observations lead to the conclusion that Mark believed his readers were suffering persecution because of their belief in Jesus and the gospel.

This conclusion is corroborated by another observation. In composing Mk 10:28-31, the evangelist includes an element of encouragement for those who face persecution: as compensation for all their suffering and loss they will obtain eternal life in the age to come (v. 30 καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζωὴν αἰώνιον). Then the roles will be reversed and those who now suffer will be rewarded and vindicated (v. 31).⁹⁶

gelium, p. 174; cf. R. Busemann, *Die Jüngergemeinde*, pp. 80-81; against R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 568.

⁹² See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 99.

⁹³ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 89.

⁹⁴ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 95; cf. R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 568.

⁹⁵ See J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 91; R. Busemann, *Die Jüngergemeinde*, pp. 82 and 210; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 28.

⁹⁶ See D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 176; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 559.

In other words, Mark's readers were Christians who, the evangelist believed, suffered persecutions because of their Christian faith. In Mk 10:28-31 the evangelist intends to encourage them.

4. MK 13:9-13

The final and most important reference to the persecution of Christians occurs in the so-called 'eschatological discourse' in Mk 13. In this speech Mark has Jesus foretell how the final breakthrough of God's kingdom will take place, and what will be the signs of its coming.

Mark introduces Jesus' monologue by having him leave the temple and state that it will be destroyed entirely (vv. 1-2). This statement occasions four of Jesus' disciples to ask him when exactly the temple will be demolished, and what will be 'the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished' (vv. 3-4).

Jesus answers that first there will be a period of heavy affliction (vv. 5-23). Only after numerous and serious disasters have occurred, will the Son of Man come to 'gather his elect from the ends of the earth' (vv. 24-27). The disasters are sure signs of the imminent breakthrough of God's kingdom (vv. 28-29), and this breakthrough will take place before the generation of Jesus' hearers has passed away (v. 30). When precisely it will take place is, however, known only to God (v. 32), and one should therefore always be prepared for it (vv. 33-37).

The passage that concerns us now is Mk 13:9-13. Here Mark has Jesus announce that Christians 'will be handed over,' 'will be beaten in local courts and synagogues,' and 'will stand before governors and kings' because of their belief in Jesus (v. 9). Mark's Jesus justifies the persecution of Christians by non-Jewish authorities by saying that, before God's kingdom breaks through, the gospel must be proclaimed to all nations (v. 10). Mark has Jesus assure his audience not to worry about what they should say in front of their persecutors, for the Holy Spirit will assist them (v. 11). The Christians will be betrayed by their next of kin (v. 12), and hated by everyone (v. 13), but if they endure all these hardships to the end they will be saved (v. 13).

The whole of Mk 13:9-13 shows vestiges of pre-Markan tradition

as well as Markan redactional adaptation. The evangelist's use of traditional material is, in my view, undeniable because of the existence of a Q parallel to Mk 13:11a-b (καὶ ὅταν ... λαλεῖτε) in Q 12:11-12, and to Mk 13:12 in Q 12:53. In this section I intend to investigate which elements in Mk 13:9-13 are taken from the pre-Markan tradition, and what has been added by the Markan redactor. This investigation will lead to the conclusion that Mark elaborated the tradition known to him by expanding the element of the persecution of Christians.

There is little doubt that Mark used pre-Markan tradition in writing Mk 13:11a-b, for this verse has a Q parallel preserved in Lk 12:11-12 and Mt 10:19.⁹⁷ The reconstruction of the Q saying is difficult, because Mt 10:19 is deeply influenced by the Markan version of the saying (Mk 13:11a-b). The existence of a Q parallel reflected by Lk 12:11-12 and Mt 10:19 cannot, however, easily be denied.

In Luke's Gospel the saying used by Mark in Mk 13:11a-b occurs twice, once in Luke's revision of Mk 13:11a-b in Lk 21:14-15, and once in the context of Q material in Lk 12:11-12. Matthew does not include the saying of Mk 13:11a-b in rewriting Mk 13:9-13 in Mt 24; here Matthew jumps from Mk 13:9 (=Mt 24:9a) to Mk 13:13 (=Mt 24:9b). The saying does occur, however, in Mt 10:19. It is likely that Mt 10:19 and Lk 12:11-12 reflect a Q version of the saying, for the following reasons.⁹⁸

First, in Mark's Gospel the saying reads μὴ προμεριμνᾶτε τί (Mk 13:11a). Both Lk 12:11 and Mt 10:19a, however, read μὴ μεριμνήσητε πῶς (...) ἢ τί.⁹⁹ Moreover, the second half of the saying in Mk 13:11b begins with the conjunction ἀλλά. In both Luke and Matthew, however, the second half of the saying (Lk 12:12/Mt 10:19b) is an explanatory clause, connected with the first half of the

⁹⁷ An extensive overview of the scholarly debate concerning the existence and wording of Q 12:11-12 is given by C. Heil (ed.), *Documenta Q. Q 12:8-12*, Leuven, 1997, pp. 569-676.

⁹⁸ The same arguments are mentioned by J.E. Amon and T. Hieke in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 527-528.

⁹⁹ See also S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 442 and note 288. As to Lk 12:11, the alternative readings μεριμνᾶτε, in A W and the Majority text, and προμεριμνᾶτε, in D and Clement of Alexandria, are scribal changes due to influence from Mk 13:11. Concerning the first ἢ τί in this verse, it will be argued below that it is a scribal insertion and does not belong to the original text of Lk 12:11; the second ἢ τί in Lk 12:11 corresponds with Matthew's ἢ τί in Mt 10:19, and reflects Q. See below, pp. 62-63, and p. 60, note 109.

saying by the particle γάρ. Such agreement of Luke and Matthew against Mark indicates that at this point Luke and Matthew used a source different from Mark's Gospel.

Secondly, in Matthew's Gospel the saying occurs in the immediate context of the same Q material that figures in the context of the saying in Luke's Gospel, namely Q 12:2-9. The connection between Q 12:2-9 and the saying in Lk 12:11-12/Mt 10:19 does not occur in Mark's Gospel.¹⁰⁰ The agreement between Luke and Matthew on this point must, therefore, be regarded as due to influence from Q. This warrants the conclusion that the saying in Lk 12:11-12/Mt 10:19 must have been taken from Q, that is, from Q 12:11-12.

It is true that in Matthew the position of Q 12:11-12 in relation to Q 12:2-9 is different from that in Luke. In Luke the saying follows his version of Q 12:2-9; in Matthew the saying precedes the passage corresponding to Q 12:2-9. This difference between Matthew and Luke is, however, understandable as a result of Matthean redaction. I wish to argue that Lk 12:2-12 is likely to reflect the original order of Q 12:2-12, while Matthew has reversed the order of the Q material in Mt 10.

There can be no doubt about the order of Q 12:2-9, for Matthew (Mt 10:26-33) and Luke (Lk 12:2-9) agree in full at this point. Matthew's version of Q 12:2-9, however, is not followed by his version of Q 12:10, as is the case in Luke.

There is sufficient reason to assume that Q comprised a passage Q 12:10; Lk 12:10 and its parallel in Mt 12:32 are clear evidence of this. Lk 12:10a-b and Mt 12:32a-b reflect a double saying, the first half of which (Lk 12:10a/Mt 12:32a) does not occur in Mark. The second half of the saying, namely Lk 12:10b/Mt 12:32b, does occur in Mark, namely in Mk 3:29. The fact that Luke and Matthew have the saying independently as a double saying, whereas Mark has only half of it, is an undeniable indication that there was a Q parallel to Mk 3:29, namely Q 12:10.

This double saying in Q 12:10 probably followed Q 12:2-9 in Q just as it does in Lk 12:2-10. For, first, the structure of Q 12:10 is

¹⁰⁰ Mark does not have the sayings of Q 12:2-9 as a unity. Q 12:2 is parallel to Mk 4:22; Q 12:8 is parallel to Mk 8:38. The parallel of Q 12:11-12 is Mk 13:11a.

parallel to that of Q 12:8-9.¹⁰¹ Secondly, the two sayings have the same topic, that of being saved or not being saved at the eschatological judgement. The fact that Q 12:10 does not follow Q 12:2-9 in Matthew's Gospel can be understood as an effect of Matthean redaction. Matthew left out Q 12:10 while rewriting Q 12:2-9 in Mt 10:26-33. But in rewriting Mk 3:22-29 in Mt 12:22-32, Matthew not only took over the second half of the saying which he found in Mk 3:29; he also added the first half of the saying as he knew it from Q 12:10a. Thus, Matthew preserved the whole saying of Q 12:10 in a context of Markan material, in Mt 12:32.¹⁰²

In other words, the omission of Q 12:10 after Q 12:2-9 in Matthew's Gospel can be understood as the effect of Matthean redaction, while Luke is likely to have preserved Q 12:10 in its original context. In Q, then, Q 12:10 probably followed Q 12:2-9.¹⁰³

Now that it has been established that in Q the passage Q 12:2-10 was a unity, the question remains of whether Q 12:11-12 immediately followed Q 12:2-10 in Q as it does in Luke, or occurred separately.

The content of Lk 12:11-12 shows a certain shift as compared to that of the preceding verses, at least Lk 12:8-10. At Lk 12:11 there seems to be a sudden change of scene from the *heavenly* judgement by the Son of Man (Lk 12:8-10) to the persecution of Christians that brings them before *earthly* courts.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the subject of εἰσφέρωσιν in v. 11 is not clear at first sight.

A possible explanation for the differences in the order of Q 12:2-12 in Luke and Matthew is that Luke changed the original order in Q by connecting Q 12:11-12 with Q 12:2-10. In that case it is not so easy to understand, however, why Luke should not have resolved the rough transition between Lk 12:8-10 and Lk 12:11.

¹⁰¹ For a reconstruction of Q 12:8-9, see H.J. de Jonge, 'Sayings on Confessing and Denying Jesus,' p. 11.

¹⁰² See also J.E. Amon, T. Hieke, D.D. Turlington, and J.M. Robinson in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 525 and 529-530.

¹⁰³ J.E. Amon, T. Hieke, D.D. Turlington, and J.M. Robinson in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 525-530, draw the same conclusion, partly on the basis of different arguments.

¹⁰⁴ This remains true if one regards all of ἐπὶ τὰς συναγωγὰς καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας as a Lukan redactional addition to the original Q text. The plural subject of εἰσφέρωσιν can only be understood as referring to people who bring other people before earthly courts or councils. The subject of εἰσφέρωσιν in Lk 12:11 is possibly the Pharisees mentioned in Lk 12:2.

An alternative explanation is that Lk 12:2-12 reflects the original order of this section in Q. In this case, the discrepancy between Q 12:8-10 and Q 12:11-12 might have been a reason for Matthew to change the order of these verses. Matthew, then, left out Q 12:10, which he included in his revision of its Markan parallel (Mk 3:29) in Mt 12:32, and made Q 12:11-12 precede Q 12:2-9. Through this intervention Matthew could work out the theme of Q 12:11-12, that is, persecution by earthly courts, in more detail: he presented Q 12:11-12 in the terms as well as in the context of its Markan parallel (Mk 13:11a-b) in Mt 10:17-22,¹⁰⁵ and added the warning not to seek martyrdom in Mt 10:23-25. Furthermore Matthew could expand the passage about the eschatological judgement Q 12:8-9 (in Mt 10:32-33) by adding some other eschatological sayings taken from Mark and Q.¹⁰⁶ Thus the fact that in Matthew's Gospel Q 12:2-10 and Q 12:11-12 occur separately is understandable as the result of Matthean redaction of the original unit Q 12:2-12.

In other words, the inference that Q 12:2-12 was a unity is the best explanation for the order of the Q material in both Matthew and Luke. Matthew is likely to have resolved the problem of the awkward connection between Q 12:2-10 and Q 12:11-12 by including these two sections separately. The rough transition between the two Q sections in Luke's Gospel probably reflects their original order.¹⁰⁷

It may be concluded that there existed a parallel of Mk 13:11a-b in Q 12:11-12. In Q the saying belonged to a context (Q 12:2-12) different from that in Mark's Gospel. The original context of Q 12:11-12 has probably been preserved in Lk 12. In Mt 10:19, however, the saying is presented in the context of its Markan parallel, Mk 13:11a-b.

The reconstruction of Q 12:11-12 is difficult because Mt 10:19 is highly influenced by Mk 13:11a-b.¹⁰⁸ But some remarks must be

¹⁰⁵ In Mt 10:17-22 Matthew follows Mk 13:9-13 closely. This is probably the reason why in Mt 24:9-13 he has only a paraphrase of Mk 13:9-13, while in the rest of Mt 24 he follows Mk 13 quite faithfully.

¹⁰⁶ Mt 10:34-36 is taken from Q 12:51-53; Mt 10:37-38 is taken from Q 14:26-27; Mt 10:39 is taken from Mk 8:35.

¹⁰⁷ J.E. Amon, T. Hieke, and L.E. Vaage in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 613-615, reach the same conclusion, partly through different arguments.

¹⁰⁸ See S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 442 and note 287.

made about Q 12:11-12 before we can identify Mark's redactional elements in Mk 13:11.

Mt 10:19 and Lk 12:11-12 run as follows:

Mt 10:19	Lk 12:11-12
v. 19a	v. 11
ὅταν δὲ	ὅταν δὲ
παραδῶσιν ὑμᾶς,	εἰσφέρωσιν ὑμᾶς
	ἐπὶ τὰς συναγωγὰς
	καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς
	καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας,
μὴ μεριμνήσητε	μὴ μεριμνήσητε
πῶς	πῶς ¹⁰⁹
	ἀπολογήσησθε
ἢ τί λαλήσητε·	ἢ τί εἴπητε·
v. 19b	v. 12
δοθήσεται γὰρ ὑμῖν	τὸ γὰρ ἅγιον πνεῦμα
	διδάξει ὑμᾶς
ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ	ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ
τί λαλήσητε·	ἃ δεῖ εἰπεῖν.

In Q the saying probably began with a ὅταν clause, followed by a main clause introduced by μὴ μεριμνήσητε (Q 12:11). The second half of the saying (Q 12:12) was an explanatory clause, connected with the first half of the saying by the particle γάρ.

It is difficult to decide which verb figured in Q in the ὅταν clause. The verb παραδίδωμι in Mt 10:19a may have been taken from Mk 13:11a. The verb εἰσφέρω in Lk 12:11 may be the result of Lukan redaction; the verb εἰσφέρω does occur in Q once (Q 11:4), but is also used by Luke redactionally.¹¹⁰ It is uncertain, therefore, whether

¹⁰⁹ Nestle-Aland wrongly reads πῶς ἢ τί ἀπολογήσησθε. In my view, the words ἢ τί following πῶς in some of the manuscripts do not belong to the original text of Lk 12:11. They do not occur in D pc it sy ^{cp} sa ^v, Clement of Alexandria or Origen, and are probably due to influence from Mt 10:19a. Doubts as to their Lukan authenticity are voiced in, e.g., B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament. A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (third edition)*, London/New York, 1971/1972, p. 159. There is no equivalent of ἢ τί in, e.g., the translation of *The New English Bible. New Testament*, Oxford/Cambridge, 1961, the *Traduction oecuménique de la Bible. Nouveau Testament*, Paris, 1972 (where a note says: 'De nombreux témoins ajoutent: ou en quoi, comme Mt 10:19.'), nor in the NRSV, Oxford, 1989 (where a note says: 'Other ancient authorities add or what.'). Against J.E. Amon and T. Hieke in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, p. 598.

¹¹⁰ See Lk 5:18, 19; Acts 17:20. The only other instances in the New Testament are Mk 6:13

Matthew or Luke (or neither) retains the verb of Q.¹¹¹ But one may safely conclude that in Q ὅταν was followed by a verb meaning something like 'bringing to trial,' just as in Mt 10:19a and Lk 12:11.

It is likely that Q contained some phrase denoting the authority or authorities before which the believers were brought. However, Mt 10:19a is no help in reconstructing this phrase in Q, because Matthew follows the text of Mk 13:9-13, and already took over the authorities from Mark 13:9 in his preceding verses Mt 10:17-18. In Mt 10:19a Matthew follows Mark (Mk 13:11) in leaving out any reference to the authorities.¹¹²

In Luke's ἐπὶ τὰς συναγωγὰς καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας (Lk 12:11) 'the synagogues' are probably the only element taken over from Q. The words ἀρχαί and ἐξουσία stand a good chance of having been added by Luke.¹¹³ The phrase καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας in Lk 12:11 refers to secular authorities; both ἀρχαί and ἐξουσία (in the plural) are common words in Greek for 'the authorities' or 'magistrates'.¹¹⁴ Now Q has a Jewish-Christian background.¹¹⁵ Therefore the mention of pagan institutions in a Q context raises the suspicion that this is an addition to the original Q text.¹¹⁶

Luke indeed had good reason to add καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας to the 'synagogues' mentioned in Q. When he wrote his Gospel at the end of the first century AD, most of the Christians no

and its parallel Lk 11:4, 1 Tim 6:7, and Heb 13:11. Moreover, Luke has a preference for compound verbs, see H.J. Cadbury, *Style*, p. 166.

¹¹¹ Cf. J. Dupont, 'La persécution comme situation missionnaire (Mc 13,9-11),' in F. Neirynck (ed.), *Études sur les Évangiles synoptiques I* (BETL 70A), Leuven, 1985, pp. 456-473, esp. p. 467. The majority of scholars, however, seems to ascribe Luke's εἰσφέρειν to Q. See, e.g., S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 442; H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, p. 191; J.E. Amon and T. Hieke in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, p. 621.

¹¹² See S. Schulz, *Q*, pp. 442-443; H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, p. 192; J.E. Amon, T. Hieke, and J.M. Robinson in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 634 and 637.

¹¹³ See also J. Dupont, *Les béatitudes II. La bonne nouvelle* (EB), Paris, 1969, p. 360; H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, p. 192; C.M. Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity. Studies on Q*, Edinburgh, 1996, p. 319; J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S. Kloppenborg (edd.), *Critical Edition of Q*, pp. 312-315; J.E. Amon, T. Hieke, M.C. Moreland, and L.E. Vaage in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 642-643.

¹¹⁴ See LSJ, s.v. ἀρχή II, 4; s.v. ἐξουσία II, 2. In the early Christian tradition, the words ἀρχαί and ἐξουσία denoting secular authorities occur in, for instance, Titus 3:1. In Lk 20:20 Luke uses the same combination of words redactionally; here ἀρχή and ἐξουσία are singular and have an abstract meaning.

¹¹⁵ See, e.g., C.M. Tuckett, *Q*, pp. 434-436.

¹¹⁶ Cf. J.E. Amon and T. Hieke in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, p. 634.

longer felt responsible to the authorities of the synagogues, since by that time the Church had gradually moved away from Judaism. The addition of καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας referring to the secular authorities serves to adapt the saying to what Luke understands to be the situation of the Lukan community.¹¹⁷ Apparently, the Lukan Christians are thought to feel under threat from the secular authorities, that is, the Roman administration.

All in all, the phrase καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας in Lk 12:11 is likely to be a Lukan addition. Probably the Q text only had τὰς συναγωγάς.¹¹⁸

The phrase μεριμνήσητε πῶς (...) ἢ τί in both Mt 10:19a and Lk 12:11 certainly derives from Q. Mk 13:11 has the present indicative of προμεριμνάω. The agreement of Matthew and Luke on the aorist subjunctive of the verb μεριμνάω against Mark certainly reflects Q.¹¹⁹ Their agreement on πῶς ἢ τί against Mark's single τί is probably also due to influence from Q.

The repetition of ἢ τί in a number of witnesses of Lk 12:11b is, in my view, due to textual corruption.¹²⁰ A scribe probably added the former ἢ τί to πῶς under the influence of the reading πῶς ἢ τί in Mt 10:19. The original text of Lk 12:11b, then, was: μὴ μεριμνήσητε πῶς ἀπολογήσησθε ἢ τί εἴπητε. This reading is found in both the eastern and the western textual tradition and is supported by Greek, Latin, Syriac, and early patristic witnesses.

¹¹⁷ See C.M. Tuckett, *Q*, p. 319; J.E. Amon, T. Hieke, M.C. Moreland, and L.E. Vaage in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 642-643. There is no reason to think that Luke added τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας under the influence of Mk 13:9. There are no verbal agreements between Lk 12:11 and Mk 13:9 as far as this phrase is concerned.

¹¹⁸ L.E. Vaage, in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 635-636, maintains that Luke is also responsible for τὰς συναγωγάς; J.E. Amon and T. Hieke, in the same volume, pp. 636-637, however, reject his arguments as unconvincing. For the purpose of the present study it makes no difference whether or not τὰς συναγωγάς is considered the result of Luke's redaction. Assuming that Q 12:11 contained some phrase denoting the authority or authorities before which the Christians have to defend themselves, I believe τὰς συναγωγάς stands a good chance of having figured in Q.

¹¹⁹ As to Lk 12:11, the alternative readings προμεριμνᾶτε, in D and Clement of Alexandria, and μεριμνᾶτε, in A W and the Majority text, are scribal changes due to influence from Mk 13:11. As far as Mt 10:19 is concerned, the observation that Matthew did not follow Mark in his choice for the verb προμεριμνάω is clarified by the fact that προμεριμνάω in Mk 13:11 is a hapax. Luke too, in rewriting Mk 13:11 in Lk 21:14, replaced Mark's προμεριμνάω, in this case with the more common προμελετάω. Matthew's choice of μεριμνήσητε in Mt 10:19 is certainly motivated by Q.

¹²⁰ See above, p. 56, note 99, and p. 60, note 109.

In Luke's $\mu\eta$ μεριμνήσητε $\pi\omega\varsigma$ ἀπολογήσησθε ἢ τί εἶπητε (Lk 12:11), the verb ἀπολογήσησθε is certainly due to Lukan redaction. Luke also added ἀπολογέομαι, a favourite term of his,¹²¹ in his rewriting of Mk 13:11 in Lk 21:14. The verb ἀπολογήσησθε is, then, a Lukan addition that did not occur in Q.¹²² By inserting it Luke provided $\pi\omega\varsigma$ with a verb of its own, thus splitting up Q's original connection between $\pi\omega\varsigma$ and ἢ τί.¹²³ Q 12:11, then, probably read $\mu\eta$ μεριμνήσητε $\pi\omega\varsigma$ ἢ τί as in Mt 10:19a.

The $\mu\eta$ μεριμνήσητε $\pi\omega\varsigma$ ἢ τί in Q 12:11 must certainly have been followed by a verb of speaking, for in both Luke and Matthew it is followed by such a verb. It is difficult, however, to decide whether Q had a form of λαλέω, as in Matthew, or εἶπον, as in Luke. Matthew's λαλήσητε (10:19a) may echo Mk 13:11a. Luke had no reason to avoid λαλέω if he found it in Q, for he normally takes it over from his source,¹²⁴ and also uses λαλέω redactionally.¹²⁵ One may assume, therefore, that Luke found εἶπητε in Q.¹²⁶ One cannot be entirely sure, however, that Luke's εἶπητε reflects the Q text, for this too may be the result of Lukan redaction.¹²⁷ Luke may have chosen a form of εἶπον (instead of λαλέω) because he felt it matched the slightly formal ἀπολογέομαι better.¹²⁸ In any case it is certain that in Q the words $\pi\omega\varsigma$ ἢ τί were followed by a verb of speaking.

Let us now turn to the second half of the saying. In Q the second half

¹²¹ J.C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, p. 105.

¹²² See also S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 443 and note 292; H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, p. 192; J. Dupont, *Les Béatitudes II*, p. 360; 'La persécution,' pp. 466-467; J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S. Kloppenborg (edd.), *Critical Edition of Q*, pp. 312-315; J.E. Amon, T. Hieke and L.E. Vaage in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, p. 648.

¹²³ The words ἢ τί after ἀπολογήσησθε in Lk 12:11 are wrongly considered the result of Lukan redaction by, e.g., J. Dupont, 'La persécution,' pp. 466-467; J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S. Kloppenborg (edd.), *Critical Edition of Q*, pp. 312-315, esp. p. 313 note 6; J.E. Amon and T. Hieke in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 650-651.

¹²⁴ See Lk 4:41; 5:21; 6:45; 8:49; 11:14; 22:47.

¹²⁵ Luke adds λαλέω to Mark in, e.g., Lk 9:11; 11:37; 22:60; 24:6. In Lukan *Sondergut*, e.g., several times in Lk 1 and 2; Lk 5:4; 7:15; 24:25, 32, 36, 44.

¹²⁶ See S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 443; H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, p. 192; J. Dupont, 'La persécution,' p. 467; J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S. Kloppenborg (edd.), *Critical Edition of Q*, pp. 312-315; J.E. Amon and T. Hieke in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 650-651.

¹²⁷ Cf. L.E. Vaage in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, p. 651.

¹²⁸ Cf. Acts 24:10 and 26:1, where ἀπολογέομαι and λέγω appear in the same context, and Acts 26:24 where ἀπολογέομαι is followed by φημί.

of the saying (Q 12:12) expressed the reason why one should not worry about what to say in court. Although it is difficult to ascertain the wording of Q in detail, the general structure of the Q saying is clear from the agreements between Lk 12:12 and Mt 10:19b. Lk 12:12 and Mt 10:19b have the following elements in common: (a) the causal particle γάρ; (b) a verb denoting the transfer of information (Lk διδάσκω; Mt δίδωμι in the passive); (c) the personal pronoun of the second person plural denoting the person to whom the information is given (Lk ὑμᾶς; Mt ὑμῖν); (d) the adjunct of time 'at that moment,' and (e) a clause denoting the content of the information provided (Luke has an object clause, Matthew a subject clause, the grammatical subject of the passive verb mentioned above, at (b)).

The phrase τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα in Lk 12:12 is probably a Lukan addition. The Holy Spirit is a favourite subject in Luke.¹²⁹ The idea that the Holy Spirit assists the disciples in their preaching and defence is also found in Acts.¹³⁰ Moreover, the phrase looks Lukan since it is a feature of Luke's style not to repeat the article when he connects an adjective with a noun.¹³¹

In writing τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα διδάξει ὑμᾶς Luke may have been influenced by Mk 13:11c (οὐ γάρ ἐστε ὑμεῖς οἱ λαλοῦντες ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον).¹³² It is uncertain, therefore, whether Luke's διδάξει reflects Q. On the other hand, there is a chance that Matthew's δοθήσεται (Mt 10:19b) has also been influenced by Mark, namely by δοθῇ in Mk 13:11a. It is hard to decide, therefore, which verb, Luke's διδάσκω or Matthew's δίδωμι (or neither), and which genre, passive or active, figured in Q. It can safely be concluded, however, that Q 12:12 contained a verb denoting the transfer of information.

Both Mt 10:19b and Lk 12:12 have the adjunct of time 'at that moment.' Although one could argue that Matthew took over the expression from Mark, the occurrence of it in Lk 12:12 is, in my view,

¹²⁹ The Holy Spirit is mentioned 5 times in Matthew, 4 times in Mark, 13 times in Luke and 43 times in Acts.

¹³⁰ See, e.g., Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31.

¹³¹ See H.J. Cadbury, *Style*, p. 192. See, e.g., Lk 12:10 τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα instead of Mk 3:29 τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον; see also Acts 10:45; 13:4; 16:6.

¹³² See H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, p. 192; cf. J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, J.S. Kloppenborg (edd.), *Critical Edition of Q*, p. 316 note 1; against S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 443; J.E. Amon and T. Hieke in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 659-660.

an indication that the temporal adjunct also figured in Q. Luke omits the temporal adjunct in his rewriting of Mk 13:11 in Lk 21:15. It is unlikely, therefore, that he should have added it under the influence of Mk 13:11 in his rewriting of Q 12:12. The word αὐτός in Lk 12:12, instead of ἐκεῖνος as in Mt 10:19b, may be due to Lukan redaction. Mark and Matthew consistently use the expression ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ, never ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ. Luke uses both ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ and ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ. In Luke, ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ may be intended to express a somewhat stronger meaning than ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ: 'at that very moment.'¹³³ Therefore Mt 10:19b ἐκείνῃ τῇ probably reflects Q, while αὐτῇ τῇ in Lk 12:12 is likely to be a redactional change by Luke.¹³⁴

In Q the saying certainly ended with a clause defining the answers the defendant would have to give. It is hard to decide, however, whether Luke or Matthew (if either) preserves the Q version of this clause. The object clause ὃ δεῖ εἰπεῖν in Lk 12:12 is probably a Lukan rewriting of the original Q text, for δεῖ with infinitive is one of Luke's favourite phrases.¹³⁵ The phrase τί λαλήσητε in Mt 10:19b may be taken from Q, but it can also be due to influence from Mk 13:11b.¹³⁶ As a result, Matthew's text cannot be regarded as preserving the Q reading with any more certainty than Luke's.

In Matthew the saying is followed by an explanatory clause (Mt 10:20) that has certainly been borrowed from Mk 13:11c. The differences between Mt 10:20 and its parallel in Mk 13:11c, are no doubt due to Matthean redaction. The phrase τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν as a reference to God is a Matthean favourite.¹³⁷ The addition of τὸ λαλοῦν ἐν ὑμῖν serves to emphasize the contrast between the 'you' and 'the Spirit.' In order to reinforce this contrast, Matthew also transposes

¹³³ See, e.g., Lk 2:38; 10:21; 13:1, 31; 20:19; 24:13, 33; Acts 16:18; 22:13.

¹³⁴ See J. Dupont, 'La persécution,' p. 467; cf. H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, pp. 192-193; J.M. Robinson in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, p. 670.

¹³⁵ Mt 8 times, Mk 6 times, Lk 18 times, Acts 22 times. For a phrase comparable to that of Lk 12:12, see, e.g., Acts 9:6 and 9:16. See also S. Schulz, *Q*, p. 443 and note 295; H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, p. 193; J.E. Amon and T. Hieke in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, pp. 671 and 674.

¹³⁶ Cf. L.E. Vaage in C. Heil (ed.), *Q 12:8-12*, p. 675.

¹³⁷ The word πατήρ referring to God is found 45 times in Matthew, only 5 times in Mark, and 17 times in Luke's Gospel. It does not occur at all in Acts. According to J.C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, p. 7, the use of πατήρ with a possessive pronoun referring to God is typically Matthean.

ὕμεις before ἐστέ. One may safely conclude that Mt 10:20 was taken over from Mk 13:11 and that the differences between Mt 10:20 and its Markan source are due to Matthew's redaction. Therefore there is no reason to suppose that this phrase occurred in Q.

Although a full reconstruction of Q 12:11-12 seems to be impossible, the result achieved so far enables us to compare the saying in Q 12:11-12 with Mark's version of the saying in Mk 13:11a-b.

Q 12:11-12	Mk 13:11a-b
v. 11	v. 11a
ὅταν δέ	καὶ ὅταν
verb denoting 'bringing to trial' + ὕμᾱς	ἄγωσιν ὑμᾶς παραδιδόντες,
ἐπὶ τὰς συναγωγὰς	
μὴ μεριμνήσητε	μὴ προμεριμνᾶτε
πῶς ἢ τί	τί
verb of speaking	λαλήσητε
v. 12	v. 11b
γάρ	ἀλλ'
verb denoting the transfer of in- formation	ὃ ἐὰν δοθῇ
personal pronoun 2nd plural	ὕμῖν
ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ	ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ
clause denoting 'what you should say'.	τοῦτο λαλεῖτε.

The sayings of Q 12:11-12 and Mk 13:11a-b have much in common. Yet there is no reason to suppose that either of them is dependent on the other. In the Markan version of the saying there are no elements that need to be regarded as dependent on Q's redaction of the saying. Nor are there any elements in Q 12:11-12 that should be considered dependent on the version of the saying in Mk 13:11a-b. Therefore the conclusion is justified that both Mark and Q independently used material from a common tradition.¹³⁸

There are two major differences between Mk 13:11a-b and Q 12:11-12. First, in the first half of the saying (Mk 13:11a/Q 12:11), Mark does not have the adjunct of place 'to the synagogues'. Sec-

¹³⁸ Contra H.T. Fleddermann, *Mark and Q*, pp. 193-195.

only, the structure of the second half of the saying in Mark (Mk 13:11b) differs from that in Q (Q 12:12). In my view both differences are due to Markan redaction.

The second half of the saying in Mark (Mk 13:11b), unlike in Q (Q 12:12), begins with a relative clause (ὃ ἐὰν δοθῇ ...), which serves as the object of the verb λαλεῖτε in the main clause. This object clause, however, is resumed in the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο. This way of structuring a sentence is typical of Mark.¹³⁹

In Mark the second half of the saying (Mk 13:11b) is connected with its first half (Mk 13:11a) with the conjunction ἀλλά. This connection with ἀλλά is certainly due to Markan redaction. In Mark there is an opposition between the negative clause μὴ προμεριμνᾶτε ... and the positive ἀλλά clause. This μὴ ... ἀλλά ... construction is a Markan favourite.¹⁴⁰ In the pre-Markan tradition, the second half of the saying (Q 12:12/Mk 13:11b) was probably, just as in Q, a causal clause giving the reason why one should not worry about what to say.

In Mark the saying is followed by the explanation 'for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit' (Mk 13:11c). The opposition οὐκ ... ἀλλά ...¹⁴¹ and the repetition of the verb λαλέω¹⁴² strongly suggest that this phrase is of Markan redactional origin. The idea, however, that God or the Holy Spirit will assist those who are persecuted, is certainly traditional. It is an early Christian idea which also occurs, for instance, in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.¹⁴³

Let us now have a closer look at the difference noted in the first half of the saying, that is, between Mk 13:11a and Q 12:11. For the main part, these phrases run parallel, at least in structure, except that Mk 13:11a has no equivalent for the phrase ἐπὶ τὰς συναγωγὰς of Q 12:11. Mark, however, does mention εἰς συναγωγὰς in Mk 13:9, as one of the institutions to which the disciples will be handed over. Therefore it is likely that the phrase 'to the synagogues,' designating the institution before which the Christians would be brought, also occurred in the common tradition underlying Mk 13:11a and Q 12:11.

¹³⁹ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 87.

¹⁴⁰ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 93.

¹⁴¹ See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 93.

¹⁴² See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 80.

¹⁴³ See 1 Cor 2:13. Jn 14:26 and 1 Jn 2:20, 27 cannot be regarded as independent of Mark.

The list of institutions to which the disciples will be handed over according to Mk 13:9 deserves further attention. It can be argued that Mk 13:9-10 is of Markan redactional origin. It is true that the idea that 'they will hand you over to the synagogues' was already present in the Christian tradition behind Q 12:11-12 and Mk 13:11a-b. However, Mk 13:9-10 is, in my view, Mark's redactional elaboration and expansion of that idea.

The introductory phrase βλέπετε δὲ ὑμεῖς ἑαυτοὺς in Mk 13:9 is almost certainly Markan.¹⁴⁴ The imperative phrase βλέπετε ὑμεῖς ἑαυτοὺς has a distinctly Markan flavour.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, the whole of Mk 13:5-37 seems to have been structured by four instances of βλέπετε, namely in vv. 5, 9, 23, and 33. We may safely conclude, therefore, that βλέπετε δὲ ὑμεῖς ἑαυτοὺς in v. 9 is of Markan origin.

All the rest of Mk 13:9, too, is clearly a redactional composition by Mark. Cuthbert H. Turner rightly noted that 'Mark's thought implies a comma after ὑμᾶς and another after δαρήσεσθε.'¹⁴⁶ Both εἰς συνέδρια and εἰς συναγωγὰς should be taken with the verb δαρήσεσθε. The phrase παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς ... αὐτοῖς in v. 9 is then structured as follows:¹⁴⁷

- (A) παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς
- (B) εἰς συνέδρια καὶ εἰς συναγωγὰς δαρήσεσθε
- (C) καὶ ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνων καὶ βασιλέων σταθήσεσθε
- (D) ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ
- (E) εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς.

The first clause, παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς (A), is taken up in Mark's

¹⁴⁴ The whole clause is absent in a number of Greek, Latin, and Syriac witnesses. This is probably due to corruption. Some early scribe may have considered the general exhortation contained in Mk 13:9a ('But you, look to yourselves.') an awkward interruption in the series of predictions in vv. 6-8 and 9b-10.

¹⁴⁵ See P. Dschulnigg, *Sprache*, p. 135: βλέπετε without following μή, μήποτε, ἴνα, πῶς etc., meaning 'beware,' occurs 6 times in Mark (Mk 4:24; 8:15; 12:38; 13:9, 23, 33). There is only one other instance in the New Testament, namely Phil 3:2 (three times in the same verse).

¹⁴⁶ See C.H. Turner, 'Notes on Marcan usage,' in J.K. Elliott (ed.), *The Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark* (Supplements to NT 71), Leiden, 1993, pp. 3-146, esp. p. 21. His main argument is that in Mark's view there is no contrast between sanhedrins and synagogues, just as there is no contrast between governors and kings. The absolute use of παραδίδομι (i.e. without mentioning to whom) for delivering someone is common in Mark (e.g., 1:14; 3:19; 14:11, 18, 21, 42, 44; 15:10, 15). In Mark εἰς often has the value of ἐν; see C.H. Turner, 'Notes on Marcan usage,' pp. 16-22.

¹⁴⁷ See also F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 179; R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 284 and note 2.

version of the pre-Markan saying in v. 11, where it is paraphrased as ἄγωσιν ὑμᾶς παραδιδόντες. The verb παραδίδωμι occurs again in v. 12. Repetition of the same verb within a short space is typical of Mark.¹⁴⁸ Therefore παραδώσουσιν in v. 9 can be considered the result of Markan redaction.

The clause παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς (A) is specified in two parallel phrases, firstly, εἰς συνέδρια καὶ εἰς συναγωγὰς δαρήσεσθε (B), and, secondly, καὶ ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνων καὶ βασιλέων σταθήσεσθε (C). The parallelism between (B) and (C) is a form of duality significant of Mark's style. The clauses (B) and (C) themselves, too, are instances of Markan duality since each has two nouns referring to the judicial institutions before which the Christians will be brought. The verbs at the end of (B) and (C) increase the suspicion still further that Mark as a redactor is at work here. The fact that the verbs δαρήσεσθε at the end of phrase (B) and σταθήσεσθε at the end of (C) have the same sound and metre, serves to strengthen the parallelism of (B) and (C), and is therefore indicative of Mark's redaction.

The saying ends with two phrases that both seem to give a reason for the Christians being handed over: 'because of Jesus' and 'as a witness to them,' that is, to their persecutors. The phrase ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ is also used redactionally by Mark in Mk 8:35 and possibly again in Mk 10:29. The phrase εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς appears also in Mk 1:44 and Mk 6:11, both times at the end of a clause, just as in Mk 13:9. It does not occur elsewhere in early Christian literature, outside of Mark's influence.¹⁴⁹ Therefore the twofold phrase ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς, too, can be ascribed to Markan redaction.

Verse 10 is also probably Markan.¹⁵⁰ It is an explanation of εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς, which makes it dependent on a Markan redactional phrase and therefore itself a redactional addition. This is confirmed by the occurrence of Mark's favourite term εὐαγγέλιον.

The preceding discussion seems to justify the conclusion that the whole of Mk 13:9-10 is the result of Markan redaction.¹⁵¹ These verses are Mark's redactional elaboration of the traditional theme of

¹⁴⁸ F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 80.

¹⁴⁹ P. Dschulnigg, *Sprache*, p. 114.

¹⁵⁰ The same conclusion is reached, on the basis of different arguments, by J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 189; J. Dupont, 'La persécution,' esp. pp. 470-471.

¹⁵¹ Cf. J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, p. 190.

Christians being handed over to the synagogues, which occurred in the pre-Markan saying reflected in Q 12:11-12 and Mk 13:11.

Let us now turn, finally, to Mk 13:12-13, to see what can be regarded as Markan redaction there.

In Mk 13:12 the evangelist develops the theme of *who* will hand over the Christians to the authorities. In writing Mk 13:12 Mark again uses traditional material. This is clear from the fact that Mk 13:12 has a parallel in Lk 12:53 and Mt 10:35, which undoubtedly goes back to Q.

Both Luke and Matthew have the saying twice, Luke in Lk 12:53 and Lk 21:16, and Matthew in Mt 10:21 and Mt 10:35. Lk 21:16 and Mt 10:21 are a rewriting of Mk 13:12. Lk 12:53 and Mt 10:35, however, reflect a Q saying. In both these verses (Lk 12:53/Mt 10:35), the warning that there will be separation between 'a man and his father, a daughter and her mother, and a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law' is introduced by the statement that Jesus has not come to bring peace but to bring separation (Lk 12:51/Mt 10:34). The introductory statement does not occur in Mark, and must therefore be taken from Q. This warrants the conclusion that Lk 12:53 and Mt 10:35 reflect a Q saying, Q 12:53.

A comparison of Lk 12:53 with Mt 10:35 shows that Q 12:53 contained the following elements: a verb denoting separation, and three pairs of persons who are separated, namely son and father, daughter and mother, and daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. For the purpose of the present study, this analysis of Q 12:53 may suffice. We can now compare Q 12:53 with Mk 13:12.

Q 12:53 and Mk 13:12 independently reflect a saying that existed in the common earlier Christian tradition underlying Mark and Q. In the Christian tradition this saying was handed down as the word of Jesus. The saying is, however, also a reminiscence of Mic 7:6. Therefore, in order to distinguish the elements that are traditional from those that can be ascribed to Markan redaction, one should compare Mk 13:12 not only to Q 12:53 but also to Mic 7:6. This comparison leads to the conclusion that there is a striking difference between Mk 13:12 on the one hand and Q 12:53 and Mic 7:6 on the other. The elements παραδώσει ... εἰς θάνατον and καὶ θανατώσουσιν αὐτοῦς in Mk 13:12 turn out to have no equivalent in either Q 12:53 or Mic

7:6. Therefore one can safely conclude that these elements have been added by Mark to the pre-Markan tradition of Mk 13:12.

The conclusion that παραδώσει ... εἰς θάνατον and καὶ θανατώσουσιν αὐτούς are Mark's additions to the pre-Markan tradition is supported by the fact that they show features of Mark's literary style. First, the phrases παραδώσει ... εἰς θάνατον and ἐπαναστήσονται ... καὶ θανατώσουσιν, are synonymous expressions of a form typical of Mark.¹⁵² Secondly, the fact that two words with the same root, θάνατος and θανατώω, occur within a short space of one another is also often something that betrays Mark's involvement.¹⁵³

The conclusion is that in writing Mk 13:12 Mark used traditional material, but added to it the notion of killing expressed in the phrases '(they) will hand (each other) over, putting (each other) to death' and 'they will kill them.' Mk 13:13 too is probably a Markan addition. It has Jesus predict that the Christians will be hated by everyone but will obtain eternal life if they endure the persecutions and sustain their commitment.

The above observations on Mk 13:9-13 lead to the following conclusions. In Mk 13:9 the evangelist makes use of the theme of the Christians' being handed over to the Jewish authorities. He borrows this theme from the pre-Markan Christian tradition reflected in Q 12:11-12 and Mk 13:11a-b. The Markan adaptation of this traditional material concerns the extension of the group of persecutors. Mark adds the idea that Christians will be persecuted by non-Jewish authorities (v. 9). The latter idea, he feels, needs justification. This justification is given in v. 10: the final breakthrough of God's kingdom will come only after the gospel has been proclaimed to the non-Jews.¹⁵⁴ The persecution of Christians by non-Jews and their testimony in pagan courts is one way in which the gospel will be preached. In short, in Mk 13:9-10 Mark has Jesus say that not only the oppression of Christians by the Jewish authorities, but also their persecution by non-Jewish authorities, is part of God's plan.

¹⁵² See F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 105.

¹⁵³ Cf. F. Neirynck, *Duality*, pp. 76-82.

¹⁵⁴ The verb δεῖ in Mark is sometimes used to express the idea that something has been predestined to happen as part of God's plan; see, e.g., Mk 8:31 and Mk 13:7. Cf. also Mk 9:11.

Mk 13:9-10, then, includes an element of comfort and encouragement. When the Christians fall victim to persecution and are brought before secular judges, they should not despair about the trustworthiness of Jesus' preaching on the coming of God's kingdom. God has not lost control of the course of history. These tribulations are part of God's plan; they are not evidence that God's plan has failed.¹⁵⁵ The persecuted Christians need not fear that their faith in the message on the coming of God's reign is misplaced or in vain. The comforting tenor of Mk 13:9-10 is supported and underlined by the traditional saying in Mk 13:11. Here it is promised that when Christian believers are handed over they should not worry, for God will come to their assistance.¹⁵⁶

Mk 13:12 underlines the gravity of the persecution. The redaction-critical analysis of this verse has shown that Mark is responsible for characterizing the persecution as life-threatening. In Mk 13:13 the evangelist again adds an element of encouragement by saying that whoever endures all hardships will be saved.

It is likely that Mark revised the traditional sayings in Mk 13:11 and Mk 13:12 with the actual situation of his readers in mind. In Mark' view, his readers suffered persecution for the sake of their Christian faith and needed encouragement. The redactional expansions in Mk 13:9-13 make clear that the Markan Christians are thought to be persecuted by Jewish (v. 9 εἰς συνέδρια καὶ εἰς συναγωγάς), as well as non-Jewish authorities (v. 9 ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνων καὶ βασιλέων).¹⁵⁷ According to Mark these persecutions seriously endanger their lives.

CONCLUSIONS

The redaction-critical analysis of the four passages in Mark's Gospel that speak about the persecution of Christians (Mk 4:17; 8:34-35; 10:29-30; 13:9-13) has made it clear that, in all four passages, the evangelist used and expanded the material he borrowed from the pre-Markan, Christian tradition. The changes he introduced show that he had a special interest in the theme of the persecution of Christians.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus II*, p. 190.

¹⁵⁶ See also, e.g., J. Zmijewski, *Eschatologiereden*, pp. 146-147.

¹⁵⁷ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium II*, p. 284.

Furthermore, it has become clear that in all four passages Mark wished to exhort and encourage the persecuted Christians. The parable of the sower and its explanation in Mk 4 convey the message that those who accept the gospel and hold firm to it despite opposition or persecution (v. 17) are the true believers (v. 20) who will be rewarded for their persistence (vv. 24-25). In Mk 8:34-9:1 the evangelist assures Christians that those who renounce Jesus and the gospel to avoid suffering will in turn be renounced by him; only those who are prepared to lose their lives because of their belief in Jesus will be saved at the final implementation of God's kingdom. Mk 10:29-30 promises Christians eternal life in the coming era as a reward for their faithfulness to Jesus and the gospel. Finally, Mk 13:9-13 presents the idea that the persecutions the Christians are suffering are part of God's plan and just a stage in the process of the coming of God's kingdom.

Mark's intention to exhort and encourage the persecuted Christians, which emerges in all four persecution passages, indicates that his interest in the theme of the persecution of Christians was inspired by the actual situation of his intended readers. Consequently, the Christians for whom Mark wrote his Gospel are believed by him to suffer persecution. I wish to emphasize that Mark's readers are *believed by him* to suffer persecution, for strictly speaking it is uncertain whether at the time Mark wrote his Gospel the Markan Christians were actually being persecuted, or were only expected by the evangelist to be persecuted in the near future. The most we can say is that in Mark's view his readers lived under the threat of persecution.¹⁵⁸

In all four passages, the persecuted are said to suffer 'because of Jesus and the gospel' (Mk 4:17; 8:35; 10:29; 13:9). Apparently, it is their adherence to the Christian movement that is considered the reason for their persecution. In none of the passages under consideration, does Mark make plain precisely why the Christian faith provokes persecution. The analysis of Mk 13:9 has made it sufficiently clear, however, that the Markan Christians are thought to be persecuted by Jewish as well as non-Jewish authorities. The pre-Markan

¹⁵⁸ Henceforth, when speaking about the 'persecution of the Markan Christians' etc. I mean the persecution which Mark thought his readers suffered or might suffer in the near future, leaving it undecided whether Mark's perception was right.

tradition used in Mk 13:9 spoke only of the handing over of Christians to the Jewish synagogues, not of their being handed over to secular courts. Mark revised the tradition, however, so as to include references to the corporal punishment inflicted on Christians by Jewish sanhedrins as well as Christians being brought up for trial before secular authorities. The persecution of the Markan Christians, then, seems to have been occasioned by the fact that the interests of the Jewish leaders in the area ran parallel with those of the Roman occupiers.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DATE OF MARK'S GOSPEL AND ITS PLACE OF ORIGIN

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter it was argued that Mark wrote his Gospel for Christian readers whom he considered to be suffering persecution because of their adherence to the Christian movement. It has become clear that the evangelist believed that these Christians were being persecuted by Jewish as well as secular authorities. In order to obtain a clearer picture of the situation of these persecuted Christians, we need to know when and where they were living.

As discussed in the introduction to the present study, there is good reason to believe that there was a close connection between the evangelist and the community for which he wrote his Gospel, so that it is justified to presume that the author and his intended readers were living at the same time and in the same geographical area.¹ The question of when and where the Markan community lived can thus be answered by establishing the date of the Gospel and its place of origin.

The question as to when and where Mark's Gospel was written is still undecided. For a long time there existed a near consensus that the evangelist wrote his Gospel in Rome sometime during the sixties of the first century AD. This so-called 'traditional' view is based primarily on the early Christian tradition concerning the origin of Mark's Gospel. The reliability of this tradition, however, has been called into question, and the 'traditional' view is gradually becoming less popular. Over the past few decades alternative answers as to the question of the Gospel's date and place of origin have been proposed.² A growing majority of scholars now date Mark's Gospel after

¹ See Introduction, pp. 15-16.

² For a review of theories on the date and place of composition of Mark's Gospel in modern

the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, and apart from Rome, Palestine³ or Syria⁴ have been suggested as the Gospel's place of origin. A scholarly consensus has, however, not yet been reached.

In this chapter I will consider the evidence available for establishing the date of Mark's Gospel and its place of origin. First, I will discuss the early Christian tradition that forms the basis of the 'traditional' view. It will become apparent that this external evidence does not provide us with historically reliable information concerning the Gospel's origin. I will subsequently, therefore, try to establish when and where Mark's Gospel was written by using internal evidence, that is, the indications concerning time and place of origin occurring within the Gospel itself.

1. THE EARLY TRADITION ON THE ORIGIN OF MARK'S GOSPEL

The earliest comment on Mark's Gospel known to us is that of Papias of Hierapolis. This testimony is preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260-339).⁵ Eusebius presents it as a quotation from Papias' *Ex-*

scholarship, see J.R. Donahue, 'The Quest for the Community of Mark's Gospel,' in F. Van Segbroeck, *et al.* (edd.), *The Four Gospels 1992* (FS F. Neirynck) II (BETL 100B), Leuven, 1992, pp. 817-838.

³ Galilee as the Gospel's place of origin has been defended by, e.g., W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus. Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Evangeliums* (FRLANT 67), Göttingen, 1956, esp. pp. 41, 89, and 146; idem, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament. Eine Einführung in ihre Probleme*, Gütersloh, 1978*, p. 148; W.H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark. A New Place and a New Time*, Philadelphia, 1974, pp. 64-65 and 129-131; W.R. Telford, *Mark* (NTG), Sheffield, 1997*, pp. 24-25; cf. idem, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark*, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 14-15.

⁴ Syria as the Gospel's place of origin has been defended by, e.g., H.C. Kee, *Community of the New Age. Studies in Mark's Gospel*, Philadelphia, 1977, pp. 100-105; G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit und Zeitgeschichte in den Evangelien. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (NTOA 8), Göttingen, 1989, pp. 246-270; idem, 'Evangelischreibung und Gemeindeleitung. Pragmatische Motive bei der Abfassung des Markusevangeliums,' in B. Kollmann, *et al.* (edd.), *Antikes Judentum und frühes Christentum* (FS H. Stegemann) (BZNW 97), Berlin/New York, 1999, pp. 389-414, esp. p. 393 and note 10; I. Broer, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament I* (NEB), Würzburg, 1998, p. 87; J. Marcus, 'The Jewish War and the Sitz im Leben of Mark,' *JBL* 111 (1992), pp. 441-462, esp. p. 460; idem, *Mark 1-8. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27), New York/London, 2000, pp. 33-37. Cf. W.G. Kümmel, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, Heidelberg, 1978¹⁹, p. 70 and note 63; P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur. Einleitung in das Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die Apostolischen Väter*, Berlin/New York, 1975, p. 347.

⁵ Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* III 39, 15. This and all further ancient testimonies on Mark as the author of the Gospel can be found in the appendix to K. Aland, *Synopsis quattuor evangeliorum*, Stuttgart, 1988¹⁹. They can also be found in H. Merkel, *Die Pluralität der Evan-*

planation of the Sayings of the Lord (Λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσεις), written in the first half of the second century AD.⁶ In the introduction to this work, also quoted by Eusebius, Papias claims to have searched for oral traditions that go back to the disciples of Jesus.⁷

In the testimony on Mark's Gospel, Papias asserts that he has heard from a presbyter called John that

'Mark, who had been Peter's interpreter, wrote down carefully, but not in order, all that he remembered of the Lord's sayings and doings. For he had not heard the Lord or been one of his followers, but later, as I said, one of Peter's. Peter used to adapt his teaching to the occasion, without making a systematic arrangement of the Lord's sayings, so that Mark was quite justified in writing down some things just as he remembered them. For he had one purpose only—to leave out nothing that he had heard, and to make no misstatement about it.'⁸

This testimony, although it is old, is, in my view, of no use to us in dating or locating Mark's Gospel. Apart from the fact that the statements of Papias in themselves do not contain any detailed information on when and where the Gospel was written, the information the testimony does contain is of questionable historical value.⁹

More than anything else it is the apologetic character of Papias' statement on Mark's Gospel which should warn us not to take it too

gelien als theologisches und exegetisches Problem in der alten Kirche, Bern, 1978. They are discussed in H. Merkel, *Die Widersprüche zwischen den Evangelien. Ihre polemische und apologetische Behandlung in der alten Kirche bis zu Augustin*, Tübingen, 1971.

⁶ The precise date of Papias' work is uncertain. Most modern scholars put the date at ca. 120/130 AD. Some scholars have argued, however, that Papias wrote earlier; see, e.g., U.H.J. Körtner, *Papias von Hierapolis. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des frühen Christentums*, Göttingen, 1983, pp. 225-226, who dates Papias to ca. 110 AD; R.H. Gundry, *Mark. A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, Grand Rapids, 1993, pp. 1027-1029, who dates Papias to ca. 101-108 AD.

⁷ Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* III 39, 3-4.

⁸ Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* III 39, 15. Translation by G.A. Williamson, in *Eusebius. The History of the Church*, Harmondsworth, 1965, p. 152.

⁹ See also, e.g., K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus und die Frage nach dem Verfasser des zweiten Evangeliums,' *ZNW* 58 (1967), pp. 172-188, esp. pp. 177 and 185-186; W.G. Kümmel, *Einleitung*, pp. 27-29 and 67; P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, pp. 259-261; W. Marxsen, *Einleitung*, p. 148; I. Broer, *Einleitung*, p. 83. Against, e.g., M. Hengel, 'Probleme des Markusevangeliums,' in P. Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien. Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982* (WUNT 28), Tübingen, 1983, pp. 221-265, esp. pp. 246-247; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, pp. 1026-1041; A.D. Baum, 'Der Presbyter des Papias über einen "Hermeneuten" des Petrus. Zu Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. 3, 39, 15,' *ThZ* 56 (2000), pp. 21-35, esp. pp. 34-35.

seriously. Papias' main objective seems to be to defend Mark's Gospel against possible doubts concerning the reliability of its contents.¹⁰ Such doubts could easily have arisen from the fact that Mark, unlike John or Matthew, was not known to have been a direct disciple of Jesus. Moreover, Mark's Gospel is quite a bit shorter and less 'complete' than, for instance, Luke's.¹¹ Papias' statement that Mark relied on what he had learned from Peter, and wrote the stories down as he remembered them from Peter's preachings seems to be an attempt to explain the differences between Mark's Gospel and the other Gospels known to Papias, and, foremost, to underline Mark's integrity.

It is important to note that Papias seems to have been the first to make a connection between the author of Mark's Gospel and the apostle Peter. It is true that Papias claims to have borrowed his information about Mark's Gospel from an older tradition, but the trustworthiness of this claim is questionable.

In the introduction to his work as quoted by Eusebius, Papias extensively describes how he himself collected his knowledge by interrogating people who had known Jesus' followers.¹² Papias underlines that such oral traditions are more reliable than information found in books.¹³ However, Papias' description of how he obtained the information does not carry conviction. It rather raises the strong suspicion that he wished to enhance the credibility and authority of his information on, and exegesis of, the teaching of Jesus by appealing to earlier spokesmen, thus pretending that his knowledge was based on what he had learned from them. The general remarks Papias makes in the introduction to his book, then, are probably meant to lend author-

¹⁰ See also W.G. Kümmel, *Einleitung*, pp. 28-29; P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, pp. 259-260; I. Broer, *Einleitung*, p. 83; R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (HTKNT 2) I, Freiburg/Basel/Wien, 1976, pp. 5-7; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (EKK 2) I, Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1978, p. 32; K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' pp. 177 and 186; U.H.J. Körtner, 'Markus der Mitarbeiter des Petrus,' *ZNW* 71 (1980), pp. 160-173, esp. pp. 161 and 172-173; E.P. Sanders, M. Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, London/Philadelphia, 1989, p. 11. Cf. R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (WBC 34a), Dallas, 1989, p. xxvii; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, pp. 22-24. Against M. Hengel, 'Entstehungszeit und Situation des Markusevangeliums,' in H. Cancik (ed.), *Markus-Philologie. Historische, literargeschichtliche und stilistische Untersuchungen zum zweiten Evangelium* (WUNT 33), Tübingen, 1984, pp. 1-45, esp. p. 6.

¹¹ See D. Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (HNT 3), Tübingen, 1987, p. 5. Cf. E.P. Sanders, M. Davies, *Studying*, p. 11.

¹² Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* III 39, 3-4.

¹³ Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* III 39, 4: ... οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων τοσούτον με ὠφελεῖν ὑπελάμβανον ὅσον τὰ παρὰ ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης.

ity to the contents of his own work. In the same way, Papias' claim that he received his information about Mark's Gospel from a presbyter called John raises the suspicion that it is due to Papias' wish to vouch for his own statements on the Gospel's origin.

In other words, although Papias claims to have based his statements concerning Mark's Gospel on older tradition, the connection between Mark and the apostle Peter is more likely to be due to the apologetic motives of Papias himself who hoped to guarantee the authority of Mark's Gospel by linking it to a direct disciple of Jesus.

A connection of some sort between Peter and someone called Mark is, admittedly, assumed in 1 Pet 5:13. This verse cannot serve, however, as an argument for the reliability of Papias' statement that the evangelist Mark was Peter's interpreter.

First of all, 1 Pet 5:13 is not a second witness besides Papias, for, in connecting the evangelist Mark and the apostle Peter, Papias may have been inspired by 1 Pet 5:13.¹⁴ According to Eusebius, Papias knew 1 Peter.¹⁵ The allusion to a connection between Peter and someone called Mark in 1 Pet 5:13, then, may have induced Papias to think that this Mark was identical with the author of the second Gospel and, thus, that the author of the Gospel was a companion of Peter's.

Moreover, it is quite possible that the connection between Peter and the Mark mentioned in 1 Pet 5:13 was invented by the author of the pseudepigraphic letter 1 Peter. It is not unlikely that the author of 1 Peter wanted to include greetings from someone else as well as Peter himself because he regarded this as suitable at the end of a letter.¹⁶ In order to evoke the person of someone who was staying with

¹⁴ See also K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' p. 186; P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, pp. 260-261; U.H.J. Körtner, 'Markus,' pp. 161 and 172; R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* I, pp. 3-10, esp. pp. 9-10; W.R. Telford, *Mark*, p. 24; idem, *Theology*, p. 11; U. Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (UTB 1830), Göttingen, 1994, p. 236; E.P. Sanders, M. Davies, *Studying*, p. 11. Cf. J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 33; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 23; idem, 'Jewish War,' pp. 442-443. Against, e.g., M. Hengel, 'Probleme,' p. 246; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 4-5. Hengel and Lührmann suppose that there existed an early tradition about a link between Peter and Mark, and that this tradition was used independently by Papias in his testimony on Mark's Gospel and the author of 1 Peter in 1 Pet 5:13. There is, however, no reason to assume that Papias is independent of 1 Pet 5:13 since Papias knew 1 Peter. The hypothesis of an older common tradition is therefore superfluous.

¹⁵ Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* III 39, 17.

¹⁶ There are also greetings from other persons than the authors at the end of the Pauline and

Peter in Rome, he may simply have introduced the common name Mark.¹⁷

Finally, even if one accepts that the author of 1 Peter knew a tradition in which Peter had a companion called Mark,¹⁸ there is still no evidence that this Mark was the author of the second Gospel.¹⁹ 'Mark' (Μάρκος, *Marcus*) was one of the most common praenomina in the Roman empire.²⁰ The connection between the Mark of 1 Pet 5:13 and the author of the second Gospel occurs for the first time in Papias.

In sum, it is likely that Papias himself is responsible for the connection between the author of Mark's Gospel and the apostle Peter. In this way Papias may have hoped to safeguard the Gospel against doubts concerning the reliability of its contents. Therefore, the historical value of the oldest testimony on the origin of Mark's Gospel is questionable.

Papias' statement on Mark's Gospel formed the starting point for the entire Christian tradition according to which Mark's Gospel was written by a companion of Peter called Mark during Peter's lifetime in Rome.²¹ This idea is first implied by Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 140-200 AD),²² and then mentioned explicitly by Clement of Alexandria

deutero-Pauline epistles; see, e.g., 1 Cor 16:19, Rom 16:21-23, Philem 23-24, and Col 4:10-14.

¹⁷ 'Mark' was one of the five most common Latin praenomina in all periods of Roman history; see H. Solin, art. 'Names, Personal, Roman,' in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth (edd.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford, 1996, pp. 1024-1026, esp. p. 1024.

¹⁸ Some scholars have argued that 1 Pet 5:13 is based on an older tradition according to which Peter had a companion called Mark; see, e.g., I. Broer, *Einleitung*, p. 83. The existence of such a tradition, however, is not confirmed by any other evidence. Other scholars have maintained that the author of 1 Peter had in mind the John Mark who figures in Acts as a follower of Paul; see, e.g., P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, p. 260. However, the John Mark in Acts is not in the first instance a companion of Peter but of Paul. He is connected with Peter only in Acts 12:12.

¹⁹ See also W.R. Telford, *Theology*, p. 11. Cf. U.H.J. Körtner, 'Markus,' p. 171; K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' p. 177; P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, p. 261.

²⁰ See H. Solin, art. 'Names, Personal, Roman,' p. 1024.

²¹ The 'Babylon' mentioned in 1 Peter as the place from which 'Peter' wrote this (pseudepigraphic) letter is thought to refer to Rome. This identification, combined with Papias' comment that the evangelist Mark was a companion of Peter, probably formed the basis of the tradition that Mark's Gospel was written in Rome. See J.R. Donahue, 'Quest,' p. 819; W. Marxsen, *Einleitung*, p. 148.

²² Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* III 1, 2 (preserved in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* V 8, 2-4). The word ἐξοδος in Irenaeus' statement on Mark's Gospel should be taken to mean 'departure,' not, as some have suggested, as an euphemism for 'death.' According to Irenaeus, then,

(ca. 150-215 AD).²³ Eventually, it became the generally accepted view on Mark's Gospel within the early Church.²⁴

It should be noted that this widespread tradition depends ultimately entirely on Papias. The early tradition according to which Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome or for the Roman Christian community depends on the alleged link between the evangelist Mark and the apostle Peter.²⁵ Information concerning such a link does not exist outside the influence of Papias.²⁶ It has been argued above that the link between the second evangelist and the apostle Peter was probably invented by Papias. As a result, the early tradition concerning the origin of Mark's Gospel, which is based on this link, does not provide us with a solid basis for establishing the place and date of the Gospel's origin.

One cannot but conclude that the early Christian tradition does not offer us any reliable indication as to where or when Mark's Gospel was written. Consequently, in trying to answer the questions concerning the date and place of origin of Mark's Gospel, one has no other lead to follow but indications gleaned from the Gospel itself.

2. THE DATE OF MARK'S GOSPEL

The assumption that the authors of the Gospels of Luke and Matthew used the Gospel of Mark sets the *terminus ante quem* for the compo-

Mark wrote during Peter's lifetime. See, e.g., E.E. Ellis, 'The Date and Provenance of Mark's Gospel,' in F. Van Segbroeck, *et al.* (edd.), *The Four Gospels 1992* (FS F. Neirynck) II (BETL 100B), Leuven, 1992, pp. 801-816, esp. pp. 803-806.

²³ Clement of Alexandria, *Hypotyposeis* VI, preserved in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* VI 14, 5-7. The same story in different wording, but also borrowed from Clement of Alexandria, *Hypotyposeis* VI, occurs in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* II 15, 1-2. Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Adumbrationes* ad 1 Pet 5:13.

²⁴ See, e.g., Prologus 'Monarchianorum,' Ephraem Syrus, *Commentarii in Diatesseron Tatiani*, according to the Syriac manuscript Chester Beatty 709, ed. L. Leloir, 1963, pp. 250-251 (see also the longer Armenian version, ed. L. Leloir, 1954, pp. 247-248); Epiphanius, *Panarion* 51, 6, 10; Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 8; *Praefatio Marci* (Wordsworth-White I, pp. 171-173). For the texts of the sources mentioned, see K. Aland, *Synopsis*, pp. 539 and 545-547.

²⁵ See P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, p. 347; J.R. Donahue, 'Quest,' p. 819.

²⁶ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* I, p. 4; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 33; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. xxvi; W.G. Kümmel, *Einleitung*, p. 68; W.R. Telford, *Theology*, p. 10; I. Broer, *Einleitung*, pp. 83-84; E.P. Sanders, M. Davies, *Studying*, p. 12. Cf. P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, p. 347. Against M. Hengel, 'Probleme,' p. 252.

sition of Mark's Gospel at approximately 85 AD.²⁷ Information about the Gospel's *terminus post quem* is to be gathered from the Gospel itself. Four passages in Mark's Gospel are, in my view, helpful in this respect. Mk 12:9, 13:2, 13:14, and 15:38 all seem to indicate that the Gospel was written after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.²⁸

The first of these passages, Mk 12:9, is part of the parable of the vineyard in Mk 12:1-12. This parable runs as follows. A man plants a vineyard, leases it to tenants and goes abroad (v. 1). He then sends a slave to the tenants to collect his share of the produce of the vineyard (v. 2). But the tenants beat him and send him back (v. 3). The owner of the vineyard sends other slaves, but they are all maltreated or killed (vv. 4-5). Then, the owner decides to send his only son hoping the tenants will respect him. But he, too, is killed (v. 8). Finally, therefore, the owner himself 'will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others' (v. 9). Moreover, in accordance with the Scriptures, God will vindicate the son who was rejected (v.10).

The parable of the vineyard is an allegory which is easy to decode. In v. 1 the description of the man planting the vineyard recalls unmistakably Isa 5:2.²⁹ In Isa 5 the man planting the vineyard is God,

²⁷ The Gospels of Matthew and Luke are generally dated no later than the nineties of the first century AD. See, e.g., W.G. Kümmel, *Einleitung*, pp. 90 and 120; P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, pp. 365 and 407; E.P. Sanders, M. Davies, *Studying*, p. 17; I. Broer, *Einleitung*, pp. 112-113 and 136-137; W. Marxsen, *Einleitung*, pp. 156 and 163.

²⁸ See also A. Jülicher, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (GTW 3) I, Tübingen, 1913⁶, pp. 282-283; R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen. Tradition und Redaktion in Mk 13*, Düsseldorf, 1968, pp. 93-94; idem, *Markusevangelium* I, p. 14; S.G.F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots. A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity*, Manchester, 1967, pp. 222-242; U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, pp. 238-239; W.R. Telford, *Mark*, pp. 22-23; idem, *Theology*, p. 13. There seems to be a near consensus among Markan scholars that the Gospel was written around 70 AD. There is no agreement, however, as to whether Mark wrote before or after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. A date after this event has been defended also by, e.g., J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 34, and II, pp. 185 and 195; P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, p. 347; G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit*, pp. 270-284; I. Broer, *Einleitung*, pp. 85-86. The view that Mark wrote shortly before the destruction of the temple is defended by, e.g., R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, pp. xxxi-xxxii; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 1042; E.P. Sanders, M. Davies, *Studying*, p. 18; A. Yarbro Collins, 'The Eschatological Discourse of Mark 13,' in F. Van Segbroeck, et al. (edd.), *The Four Gospels 1992* (FS F. Neirynck) II (BETL 100B), Leuven, 1992, pp. 1125-1140, esp. pp. 1132-1133. The question is left undecided by, e.g., W.G. Kümmel, *Einleitung*, p. 70; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 6; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, pp. 37-39; idem, 'Jewish War,' p. 460; cf. W. Marxsen, *Einleitung*, p. 147.

²⁹ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 215; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 145; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 198; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 659.

the vineyard itself is Israel.³⁰ Accordingly, in Mk 12:1 the owner of the vineyard is God, the vineyard is the Jewish people.

God entrusted the leadership over his people to the 'tenants,' the political and religious leaders of the Jews (v. 1). It is clear from v. 12 that the tenants indeed stand for the Jewish leaders. In v. 12 the chief priests, scribes, and elders, that is, all parties that made up the Jewish Sanhedrin,³¹ are said to be aware 'that he had told this parable against them.' In effect, the parable accuses them of bad leadership over Israel.

The owner sending slaves to the vineyard, who are maltreated and killed by the tenants (vv. 2-5), is an image of God who sent prophets to his people who were harassed and put to death by the Jewish leaders.³² Mark depicts Jesus as the last prophet sent by God, being God's 'beloved son' (v. 6). But Jesus is also killed by the Jewish leaders, just like the prophets in the past (vv. 7-8). Therefore, God will intervene, take the leadership over Israel away from the Jewish leaders, and give it to others (v. 9). This shift of authority is the element that interests us now.

In the first century AD, after Jesus' death, there was in fact only one major change in the political administration of Palestine. This change took place after the Jewish Revolt and was an immediate result of its outcome. Until 70 AD Judea, together with Galilee and Samaria, was administered by Roman governors (*praefecti*, later *procuratores*) who were subordinate to the legate (*legatus*) of the province Syria. After the end of the Jewish War, Judea became a separate Roman province on the same footing as the province Syria. From then on Judea was ruled by its own Roman legate, who was at the same time the commander of the Roman legion stationed in the

³⁰ Cf. also Ps 80:8-9.

³¹ See E. Schürer, G. Vermes, et al., *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ II*, Edinburgh, 1979 (revised edition), pp. 212-213.

³² See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium II*, pp. 216-217; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus II*, p. 146; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 199; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 660. In the Old Testament the prophets are often depicted as God's servants. For the prophets as God's δούλοι in the LXX see, e.g., 2 Kings 9:7; 17:13, 23; 21:10; 24:2; Ezra 9:11; Jer 7:25; 25:4; Ezek 38:17; Am 3:7; Zech 1:6; and Dan 9:6 in Theodotion. For the idea that the prophets used to be killed by the Jewish people, see O.H. Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1967.

province.³³ The relatively large degree of self-government Judea had enjoyed until 70 AD no longer existed after the seizure of Jerusalem. During the Roman occupation of the country from 6 AD up to 70 AD, the internal affairs of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had to a great extent been handled by the Jerusalem Sanhedrin.³⁴ After 70 AD, however, the Sanhedrin could no longer exercise its former authority, for the Romans took the administration of Judea directly into their own hands.³⁵

Precisely this event is reflected in Mk 12:9. Mark has Jesus tell the 'chief priests, scribes, and elders' (Mk 11:27), that is to say, the members of the Sanhedrin, that God will deprive them of their authority over Israel and give it to others. Mk 12:1-12, then, refers to the fact that after the fall of Jerusalem the Sanhedrin lost its role in the administration of the country, and the Romans brought the Judean province directly under their rule.³⁶ Mk 12:1-12 is evidence, therefore, that Mark's Gospel was written after the end of the Jewish War, that is, after 70 AD.³⁷

The above observation concerning Mk 12:9 is warranted by evidence found in Mk 13. The first verse in this chapter that can provide some clues about the date of Mark's Gospel is Mk 13:2.

In Mk 13:1 the evangelist reports that as Jesus and his disciples are leaving the Jerusalem temple, one of the disciples draws Jesus' attention to its magnificent buildings (v. 1). In Mk 13:2 Mark has Jesus react to this by saying that 'not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

I emphasize that this so-called 'temple saying' in Mk 13:2 is a

³³ E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *History* I, p. 514.

³⁴ E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *History* II, p. 206.

³⁵ E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *History* II, p. 209.

³⁶ See also D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 199-200. Many scholars seem to believe that Mk 12:9 refers to God giving up his special relationship with the Jews and transferring it to the Christians, including gentile Christians. In my view, this interpretation of Mk 12:9 is implausible since 'the vineyard' in the parable does not stand for Israel's salvation, but for the Jewish people (cf. Isa 5). Against, e.g., R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, pp. 220-221; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, pp. 147-149; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 663; O.H. Steck, *Gewaltsame Geschick*, p. 272.

³⁷ See also A. Jülicher, *Einleitung*, pp. 282-283; P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, p. 347; U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, p. 239; W.R. Telford, *Mark*, pp. 22-23; idem, *Theology*, p. 13.

Markan redactional composition.³⁸ There are no parallels to v. 2c that indicate the existence of the 'temple saying' prior to Mark's Gospel.³⁹ Moreover, the saying in v. 2c shows some typically Markan features.⁴⁰ Finally, it should be noted that the interpretation of v. 2c as a prediction of the destruction of the temple depends entirely upon the saying's context, Mk 13:1-2.⁴¹ Now the whole of Mk 13:1-4 is likely to be of Markan redactional origin. Mk 13:1-2 is a narrative springboard meant to prepare Mark's readers for the question from four of the disciples in vv. 3-4 as to when the temple will be destroyed. This question in turn serves as a narrative transition to the so-called 'eschatological discourse' of Jesus in Mk 13:5-37. The view that Mark is responsible for Mk 13:1-4 is warranted by the occurrence of features typical of Mark's dual style as well as typically

³⁸ See also, e.g., R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen*, pp. 84-87; W. Kelber, *Kingdom*, pp. 111-112; J. Lambrecht, *Die Redaktion der Markus-Apokalyypse. Literarische Analyse und Strukturuntersuchung*, Rome, 1967, pp. 89-91. Against J. Gnilya, *Das Evangelium nach Markus II*, pp. 181-183; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 218; U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, p. 239; A. Yarbro Collins, 'Mark 13,' p. 1126; E. Brandenburger, *Markus 13 und die Apokalyptik* (FRLANT 134), Göttingen, 1984, pp. 41 and 75-76.

³⁹ The parallels in Mt 24:2 and Lk 21:6 are dependent on Mk 13:2; the agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark are due to their attempts to avoid Mark's double οὐ μή. The Q saying that is found in Lk 13:35/Mt 23:38 is not a parallel to Mk 13:2, for it does not refer to the destruction of the temple but to God abandoning it as his dwelling place. Jn 2:19 is not a parallel to Mk 13:2, but to Mk 14:58 and 15:29. In my view, Jn 2:19 is even dependent on its parallels in Mark, especially on Mk 14:58. The saying in Mk 14:58 has a dual structure typical of Mark's style (see F. Neirynck, *Duality in Mark. Contributions to the Study of the Markan Redaction* (BETL 31), Leuven, 1988, pp. 94 and 134); the same antithetic parallelism is found in Jn 2:19. Moreover, all differences between John's version of the saying and Mark's can be understood as due to John's redaction. From Jn 2:21-22 it is clear that John wants the reader to understand the saying metaphorically as referring to Jesus' death and resurrection after three days. Mark's 'I will destroy' has, therefore, been changed into the second person plural imperative; λύσατε puts the burden of the destruction, that is Jesus' death, on the Jews Jesus is speaking to. The words χειροποίητος and ἀχειροποίητος in Mk 14:58 do not suit John's metaphorical interpretation and have therefore been left out. The verb οἰκοδομέω has been replaced by ἐγείρω, for ἐγείρω can mean both 'raise (from the dead)' and 'erect a building' (see LSJ, s.v. ἐγείρω I, 3 and 4). The phrase ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις in Jn 2:19 against διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν in Mk 14:58 may be influenced by the parallel to Mk 14:58 in Mk 15:29. Thus, Jn 2:19 is probably dependent on Mk 14:58. See also F. Neirynck, 'John 5,1-18 and the Gospel of Mark,' in F. Van Segbroeck (ed.), *Evangelica II* (BETL 99), Leuven, 1991, pp. 699-712, esp. pp. 710-711.

⁴⁰ Features of typically Markan duality in the saying in v. 2c are the double οὐ μή, and the synonymous phrases οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ and ὅς οὐ μὴ καταλυθῇ; see F. Neirynck, *Duality*, pp. 88, 105, and 129.

⁴¹ See also R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen*, p. 89.

Markan vocabulary.⁴² In other words, Mk 13:2 is a Markan composition, which enables one to use this verse as an argument in the discussion on the date of the final redaction of Mark's Gospel.⁴³

In my view, the 'temple saying' in Mk 13:2 is to be regarded as a *vaticinium ex eventu*, and, therefore, as an indication that the Gospel was written after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD.⁴⁴ Mark presents the prediction of the destruction of the temple in Mk 13:2 as a saying of Jesus. The wording of the saying leaves no doubt about the temple's definitive ruin: 'not one stone will be left ... upon another.' Moreover, from Mk 13:30 it is clear that, according to Mark, the fulfilment of this prediction was to be expected before the last surviving people of Jesus' generation died.⁴⁵ In my view, the evangelist could not have presented the prediction of the destruction of the temple as an utterance of Jesus with such firmness unless he was very certain about its fulfilment. Otherwise he would have risked

⁴² Instances of Markan duality are listed in F. Neirynck, *Duality*: v. 1, ποταποὶ λίθοι ... ποταπαὶ οἰκοδομαί, p. 105; ἐκπορευομένου ... ἐκ, p. 75; v. 1 ἐκπορευομένου and v. 3 καθημένου, p. 83; v. 1 and v. 2 corresponding discourse, p. 129; v. 3 εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἑλαιῶν κατέναντι τοῦ ἱεροῦ, p. 95; v. 3 group of four disciples, p. 110; v. 4 double question, p. 126; question and corresponding answer (vv. 7, 11-13, 14, 28, 29, 30), pp. 129-130; v. 4 εἰπὼν ἡμῖν with v. 5 ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἤρξατο λέγειν αὐτοῖς, p. 120. For typically Markan vocabulary in vv. 1-4, see P. Dschulnigg, *Sprache, Redaktion und Intention des Markusevangeliums. Eigentümlichkeiten der Sprache des Markus-Evangeliums und ihre Bedeutung für die Redaktionskritik*, Stuttgart, 1986: v. 3 ἐπερωτάω, pp. 136-137; κατ' ἰδίαν, pp. 127-128. See also R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen*, pp. 84-92 and 96-105.

⁴³ Against U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, p. 239.

⁴⁴ See also, e.g. R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* I, p. 14 and II, p. 272; idem, *Naherwartungen*, pp. 93-96; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 34 and II, pp. 185 and 195; W.R. Telford, *Mark*, pp. 22-23; G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit*, p. 271; idem, 'Evangelischreibung,' pp. 394-395. Against this position, see, e.g., R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, pp. xxxi-xxxii; G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days. The Interpretation of the Olivet Discourse*, Peabody, 1993, pp. 363-364. Against the theory that Mk 13:2 is a *vaticinium ex eventu*, some scholars have adduced the argument that Mark's description of the temple's destruction is inadequate and lacks detail (e.g., E.P. Sanders, M. Davies, *Studying*, p. 18; I. Broer, *Einleitung*, p. 85; A. Yarbro Collins, 'Mark 13,' p. 1127; H.C. Kee, *Community of the New Age*, pp. 100-101). However, whether Mark's knowledge about the temple's ruin was detailed or superficial is of no relevance here; the fact that Mark mentions it at all indicates that he wrote his Gospel after this event. See also J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 38; Marcus notes that also Josephus, who is generally considered an eyewitness to the fall of Jerusalem, 'inaccurately asserts that the temple was razed to the ground by Titus' (*B.J.* VII 1-4).

⁴⁵ The words ταῦτα πάντα in Mk 13:30 refer to all the predicted events of Mk 13:5b-27. These verses are Jesus' answer to the question when the temple will be destroyed; the destruction of the temple is implied in v. 14. Therefore, according to Mark, the destruction of the temple would also take place before the last survivor of Jesus' generation has died.

having Jesus pronounce a prophecy that would be falsified by the facts, which is a highly implausible supposition. This means that, judging from the 'temple saying' in Mk 13:2, it is likely that the evangelist knew that the temple had been destroyed, that is, that he wrote his Gospel after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

A date after 70 AD is likely also on the basis of the evidence of Mk 13:14. Mk 13:14 is part of the so-called 'eschatological discourse' (Mk 13:5-37). This discourse forms Jesus' answer to the disciples' question in Mk 13:4 as to when the temple would be destroyed (πότε ταῦτα ἔσται v. 4) and what signs would herald the end of this era (τί τὸ σημεῖον ὅταν μέλλῃ ταῦτα συντελεῖσθαι πάντα; v. 4).⁴⁶ Jesus' answer begins with an enumeration of all sorts of afflictions that will signal the proximity of the end (Mk 13:5b-8), followed by a section in which the evangelist has Jesus predict the persecution of Christians (Mk 13:9-13).

The next section, Mk 13:14-23,⁴⁷ has Jesus saying that 'when you see the desolating abomination stand where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains' (v. 14). There will be no time for delay; one will need to flee immediately (vv. 15-18). 'For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be' (v. 19). At that time there will be such heavy affliction that no one would be able to survive 'if the Lord had not cut short those days' (v. 20). And at this time the Christians should be on their guard against false prophets and pseudo-christs (vv. 21-23).

Part of this section, namely Mk 13:14-20, has often been regarded

⁴⁶ The words ταῦτα συντελεῖσθαι πάντα in Mk 13:4 seem to be a reminiscence of Dan 12:7. In Daniel the passive verb συντελεῖσθαι with πάντα ταῦτα refers to the end of time. In view of Jesus' answer in Mk 13:5b-37, the same meaning must be intended in Mk 13:4.

⁴⁷ In my view, Mk 13:14-23 forms a unit. From τότε in v. 14b onward the whole is syntactically, or at least 'logically,' dependent on the introductory phrase ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε ... ὅπου οὐ δεῖ in v. 14. This phrase is the introduction of a new section. The τότε in v. 14 and that in v. 21 both resume the ὅταν clause in v. 14. The first τότε (v. 14) introduces what will happen to the people in Judea. The second τότε (v. 21) introduces what will happen to 'you,' that is, from Jesus' perspective to the disciples, but from Mark's perspective to the Markan community. See also J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 180; A. Yarbro Collins, 'Mark 13,' p. 1134.

as taken from a pre-Markan source.⁴⁸ The theory of a pre-Markan *Vorlage* of Mk 13, the so-called 'Little Apocalypse theory,' arose in the nineteenth century and became very popular.⁴⁹ According to this theory some elements of the discourse in Mk 13 were taken by the evangelist from a written apocalyptic document. Often this document was held to be of Jewish origin. According to some scholars, the rest of the discourse, especially the paraenetic elements, preserved authentic sayings of Jesus. Some of these scholars believed these sayings stemmed from a second document.

The Little Apocalypse theory, however, has little to commend it. George R. Beasley-Murray argues convincingly that the theory arose from the horror of eschatology that existed among scholars of the nineteenth century. According to Beasley-Murray,

'the theory of a "little apocalypse" in Mark 13 was not the product of a dispassionate analysis of the text; it was the last stage of a developing emotional reaction to a theological problem propounded by agnostics.'⁵⁰

This problem was the insight that the announcement of the imminent eschatological breakthrough of God's kingdom as predicted by Jesus had not been fulfilled. In order to 'save' Jesus from criticism, scholars tended to regard the eschatological elements as inauthentic sayings, not stemming from Jesus himself.

Initially, the distinction between sections from the hypothesized pre-Markan apocalyptic source and other sections was made on the basis of content. A distinction was made between eschatological or apocalyptic units and paraenetic units. Units falling into the former category were supposed to have belonged to the apocalyptic document. Later, several scholars tried to provide the source theory with a more solid basis by drawing arguments from the wording of the

⁴⁸ See, e.g., R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, pp. 289-290; E. Brandenburger, *Markus 13*, p. 41.

⁴⁹ For a detailed analysis of the different forms of this theory and its development up to 1988, see G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days*. The discussion up to 1950 was summed up earlier in G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Future. An Examination of the Criticism of the Eschatological Discourse, Mark 13, with Special Reference to the Little Apocalypse Theory*, London, 1954.

⁵⁰ G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days*, p. 19.

Greek text. None of these arguments, however, has proved to be convincing.⁵¹

True, there can be no doubt that in writing Mk 13:5b-37 Mark used traditional material. Some phrases in the discourse are clear reminiscences, for instance, of Old Testament motifs,⁵² other passages have indisputable parallels in Q.⁵³ There is, however, no reason to suppose that prior to Mark this traditional material already existed in the form of a 'discourse.'⁵⁴ The theory that an apocalyptic document underlies Mk 13 is unconvincing. Mk 13:14-20 is, therefore, valid evidence in the discussion on the date of the final redaction of Mark's Gospel.⁵⁵

Of special interest to us is v. 14a 'when you see the desolating abomination stand where he ought not to be' (ὅταν δὲ ἴδῃτε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ἐστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ). The phrase βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως in v. 14 is a reminiscence of Daniel (LXX 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). In Daniel the phrase figures in a prophecy foretelling the profanation of the temple that will precede God's intervention in history. In Daniel the phrase is, in fact, a *vaticinium ex eventu* of an event that took place in 167 BC. In that year, Antiochus Epiphanes profaned the Jerusalem temple by building an altar to the Olympian Zeus.⁵⁶ This action was part of his cult reforms. For the author of the book of Daniel, however, this profanation meant the ruin of the temple cult and signified that the final stage of history had begun.

The fact that in Daniel the phrase βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως refers to the desecration of the temple in 167 BC occasioned expositors

⁵¹ All arguments are discussed and evaluated by G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days*. For a comprehensive overview of the arguments used, and the associated problems in each case, see A. Yarbro Collins, 'Mark 13,' pp. 1129-1132.

⁵² The phrase βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως in v. 14, for instance, is a reminiscence of Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11. V. 19a is a reminiscence of Dan 12:1; v. 24b of Isa 13:10; v. 25 of Isa 34:4; v. 26 of Dan 7:13-14.

⁵³ For example, v. 11 is a parallel to Q 12:11-12; v. 12 to Q 12:53.

⁵⁴ See also G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days*, p. 362: 'Of one thing, however, we may be confident: there is neither evidence nor likelihood that the groups of sayings which we have described were brought together to form a single discourse prior to Mark.'

⁵⁵ Against U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, p. 239.

⁵⁶ The event is mentioned in 1 Macc 1:54 and 59. See J. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 195; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 221; G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days*, pp. 408-409.

of Mk 13:14 to assume that this passage, too, refers to a desecration of the Jerusalem temple. Many scholars, therefore, considered Mk 13:14 to reflect the attempt of the Roman emperor Caligula to erect a statue of himself in the temple in Jerusalem in 40 AD. Although this attempt was not successful, according to Josephus it caused considerable commotion among the Jews.⁵⁷ This interpretation of v. 14 was defended by many scholars who adhered to the Little Apocalypse theory. They supposed the alleged apocalyptic document to be the result of Jewish reflection upon this event. Consequently, they dated that document to 40 AD or shortly after.⁵⁸

The main problem of taking v. 14 as referring to the Caligula crisis of 40 AD, however, is that the whole of Mk 13:5b-37 is the answer to the question about when the temple will be destroyed (Mk 13:4). There is no mention of profanation; the issue is the temple's destruction. A more plausible solution is, therefore, to regard v. 14 as referring to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.⁵⁹

Furthermore, it is remarkable that in Mk 13:14a ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ἐστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ the neuter noun βδέλυγμα is qualified by the masculine participle ἐστηκότα. This suggests that Mark was not thinking of a thing, like a statue or altar, but of a man or male person.⁶⁰ For some scholars this has been reason to interpret τὸ βδέλυγμα as referring to the Antichrist.⁶¹ This interpretation, however, has convincingly been refuted.⁶² In view of our conclusion that v. 14 most probably refers to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, Lührmann's explanation of the remarkable masculine form is, in my view, the most likely. According to Lührmann,

⁵⁷ Josephus, *B.J.* II 185-203.

⁵⁸ E.g., A. Piganiol, G. Hölscher, B.W. Bacon; for a discussion of their theories, see G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days*.

⁵⁹ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, pp. 291-292; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 195; L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *The Antecedents of Antichrist. A Traditio-Historical Study of the Earliest Christian Views on Eschatological Opponents* (Supplements to *JSJ* 49), Leiden/New York/Köln, 1996, pp. 36-37.

⁶⁰ See also, e.g., R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen*, p. 140; L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *The Antecedents of Antichrist*, pp. 36-37.

⁶¹ E.g., E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus übersetzt und erklärt* (KEK I, 2), Göttingen, 1951¹¹, pp. 275-276; E. Klostermann, *Das Markusevangelium* (HNT 3), Tübingen, 1971⁵, p. 135; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, pp. 195 and 199.

⁶² See, e.g., R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen*, pp. 140-141; idem, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 291; E. Brandenburger, *Markus 13*, pp. 83-85; L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *The Antecedents of Antichrist*, pp. 36-37; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 222.

one should think of the 'desolating abomination' as the Roman general or his army.⁶³ The temporal clause in v. 14a can then be paraphrased as: 'When you see the Roman soldier(s) in the temple.' In short, v. 14a ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ἐστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ is easy to understand if one supposes that the evangelist knew that the temple had been captured by the Roman army.⁶⁴

There is an indication that Mk 13:14-23, a description of the consequences of that event, does indeed reflect the actual situation at the time of the final redaction of Mark's Gospel. In v. 19 the evangelist remarks that 'in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be.' The 'now' at the end of this verse is remarkable.

The whole of Mk 13:5b-27 is presented by the evangelist as Jesus' prediction of the future; Jesus continuously speaks of the events as things that will happen 'in those days.' Therefore, one would expect Mark's Jesus to say in v. 19 'such as has not been ... until then,' not 'until now.'⁶⁵ Thus in v. 19 there is a change of perspective between the words αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι, which depict the future events from Jesus' viewpoint, and the word νῦν, which refers to the same events from a different viewpoint, i.e. that of the author.⁶⁶ The 'now' in v. 19 seems to reflect Mark's time rather than Jesus'.⁶⁷ Apparently, the θλίψεις depicted in vv. 14-23 reflect the actual situation at the time when the Gospel was written.⁶⁸

In sum, Mark regards the suffering and oppression in vv. 14-23,

⁶³ D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 222. See also L.B. Lietaert Peerbolte, *The Antecedents of Antichrist*, pp. 37-38 and p. 37, note 4; R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen*, pp. 142-143; idem, *Markusevangelium II*, p. 291.

⁶⁴ See, e.g., R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen*, pp. 139-144.

⁶⁵ Mk 13:19 is, in fact, a reminiscence of Dan 12:1. Contrary to Mark, the verse in Daniel reads 'that day' (LXX ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης; Theodotion ἕως τοῦ καιροῦ ἐκείνου). See also L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *The Antecedents of Antichrist*, p. 40 and note 4; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 29. For a traditio-historical overview of the expression 'such as has never been before, nor ever shall be again,' see K. Berger, *Die griechische Danieliäpokalypse. Eine altkirchliche Apokalypse. Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (SPB 27), Leiden, 1976, pp. 70-76.

⁶⁶ See also the closing remark in Mk 13:37. The phrase ὁ δὲ ὑμῖν λέγω πᾶσιν λέγω seems to reflect the author's attempt to make the exhortations applicable not only to the four disciples Jesus is speaking to, but to all Christians, that is, to the people for whom Mark wrote the Gospel.

⁶⁷ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium II*, p. 294; idem, *Naherwartungen*, pp. 151-153; L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *The Antecedents of Antichrist*, p. 40; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 29.

⁶⁸ See also R. Pesch, *Naherwartungen*, pp. 151-153; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 29.

which immediately follow the destruction of the Jerusalem temple mentioned in v. 14a, as happening in the present time. The evangelist, then, probably wrote his Gospel during the aftermath of the Jewish Revolt, after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple.

The conclusion reached thus far is supported by yet another argument borrowed from Mk 15:38. This verse is part of a larger section, Mk 15:33-39, in which Mark relates how Jesus died. After three hours of darkness Jesus cries with a loud voice 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (v. 34). Some of the bystanders say mockingly he is calling for Elijah (v. 35). Someone even tries to refresh him and to prolong his life by giving him vinegar to drink, in order to see if Elijah will really come to save Jesus (v. 36).⁶⁹ But Jesus dies (v. 37). Then, the evangelist says, 'the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom' (v. 38). And a centurion 'who stood facing it,' after he 'saw that in this way he breathed his last, said, "Truly this man was God's son"' (v. 39).

Mark, thus, depicts Jesus' death as immediately followed by a supernatural event, namely the rending of the temple curtain (v. 38).⁷⁰ This event is a sign that God has not forsaken Jesus. Those who expected Jesus to be saved on the cross before he died must have seen his death as the sign that God had indeed forsaken him. But the centurion understands how to interpret the supernatural event: God's tearing of the temple curtain is a sign that God regards Jesus as his son, and will vindicate him and avenge his death.⁷¹

Some scholars rightly state that the rending of the temple curtain means the profanation of the temple and presages the temple's de-

⁶⁹ For this interpretation of Mk 15:35-36, see also, e.g., R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, pp. 496-497; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 323; J.D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel*, Philadelphia, 1983, p. 130.

⁷⁰ In my view, Mk 15:38-39 are of Markan, redactional origin for they show some typically Markan features. For v. 38 ἀπ' ἄνωθεν as a specimen of Markan duality, see F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 76. Another form of duality is the double adjunct εἰς δύο ἀπ' ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω. The noun ὁ νοός is probably redactional in Mk 14:58 and 15:29, the verb σχίζω in Mk 1:10. V. 39a ἰδὼν ... ἐξέπνευσεν after v. 37 is, according to Neirynck, an instance of 'correspondence in narrative' typical of Mark's style (F. Neirynck, *Duality*, p. 113; see also p. 81). The characterization of Jesus as God's son is a typically Markan motif (see Chapter 6, pp. 204-206). See also D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 264.

⁷¹ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 498.

struction.⁷² By tearing the temple curtain, God effectively deprives the holiest part of the temple, the centre of Jewish worship, of its protection.⁷³ It prefigures the end of the Jewish cult.

The implication of this interpretation is that according to Mark the destruction of the temple was announced by God at the moment Jesus died, as God's revenge for the murder of Jesus.⁷⁴ This interpretation is likely to be right for it corresponds to Mark's idea in Mk 12:9. There, Mark depicts the Roman victory over the Jews as God's vengeance for their murdering Jesus. Apparently, Mark regards the Roman victory over the Jews and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple as an act of vengeance by God.

It is highly unlikely that Mark would have presented Jesus' death as avenged by God through the destruction of the temple, as he does in Mk 15:38, if that event had not yet taken place. One may conclude, therefore, that Mk 15:38 corroborates the conclusion that the Gospel

⁷² E.g., D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 264; M.D. Hooker, *A Commentary to the Gospel according to St. Mark* (BNTC), London, 1991, pp. 377-378.

⁷³ There has been discussion among scholars about which of the two curtains in the temple was meant by Mark. In the LXX καταπέτασμα is used to refer to two different curtains: (1) the inner curtain between the Holy and the Holy of Holies (e.g., 2 Chr 3:14; 1 Macc 1:22; Josephus, *B.J.* V 219; cf. the inner curtain of the tabernacle in, e.g., Ex 26:31-35; 27:21; 30:6; 35:12; 40:3, 21-26; Lev 4:6, 17; 16:2, 12, 15; 21:23; 24:3; Num 4:5), and (2) the outer curtain between the temple and the forecourt (Josephus, *B.J.* V 212; about the outer curtain of the tabernacle, e.g., Ex 26:37; 35:15; 38:18; 40:5; Num 3:26). The καταπέτασμα in v. 38, however, is undoubtedly the inner curtain between the Holy and Holy of Holies. The outer curtain, between the temple and the forecourt, had no cultic significance. Tearing the outer curtain, therefore, would not have been very impressive as an act of God in reaction to Jesus' death. The inner curtain, however, was sprinkled with blood on the day of Atonement (Lev 4:6, 17). It was the only dividing line between the Holy and Holy of Holies, since there was no door there. See C. Schneider, art. καταπέτασμα, *ThDNT* III, pp. 628-630. Some scholars have argued that Mark must have been thinking of the outer curtain because the inner curtain could not be seen from outside. But the centurion, according to Mark's account, was one of the bystanders at the foot of the cross (παρεστηκόως v. 38, cf. παρεστηκότων v. 35), facing the temple (ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ v. 38). From this position the man probably could not see either of the curtains. In fact, the argument misunderstands Mark's intention. Mark did not have the intention of writing a historical account. His aim was to convince his readers that God did not leave Jesus' death unavenged. The rending of the temple curtain is God's sign of this. Mark introduced the centurion to interpret the supernatural event as God's intervention in favour of Jesus. Mark may not even have known that there were two curtains, for his knowledge of the temple appears to be limited.

⁷⁴ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, pp. 498-499. Cf. J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, pp. 323-324.

was written after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, that is, after 70 AD.⁷⁵

In sum, Mk 13:2 and 15:38 indicate that at the time of writing Mark knew that the Jerusalem temple had been destroyed by the Romans. This justifies the conclusion that Mark's Gospel was written after the temple's destruction in August of the year 70 AD. This conclusion is reinforced by the observation that Mk 12:9 reflects the administrative situation of Palestine after the end of the Jewish Revolt. Finally, Mk 13:14-23, and especially Mk 13:19, indicates that the evangelist considers the aftermath of that war to be his own times.

3. THE PLACE WHERE MARK'S GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN

For a long time an almost general consensus existed in New Testament scholarship that Mark's Gospel was written in Rome. This theory was based on the early Church tradition concerning the Gospel's origin. In support of this theory, scholars adduced the high number of Latinisms that occur in Mark's Gospel.⁷⁶ However, the arguments in favour of the Roman origin of Mark appear to be weak. As has already been argued above, when it comes to literary-historical issues regarding Mark's Gospel, the early Christian tradition, founded as it is on Papias' apologetical statements, is far from reliable. Nor is the great number of Latinisms a valid argument. Several scholars have noted that the Latinisms in Mark's Gospel are mainly military, administrative, or commercial terms.⁷⁷ These terms could easily spread throughout the Roman world and become loan words wherever in the

⁷⁵ Cf. A. Jülicher, *Einleitung*, p. 282; P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, p. 347; J. Gnika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I*, p. 34; U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, p. 239.

⁷⁶ E.g., M. Hengel, 'Entstehungszeit,' p. 44; V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark. The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes*, London, 1966², pp. 32 and 44-45; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, pp. 1043-1044; cf. J. Gnika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I*, p. 34; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. xxx.

⁷⁷ E.g., A. Jülicher, *Einleitung*, pp. 279-280; W.G. Kümmel, *Einleitung*, pp. 69-70; W.H. Kelber, *Kingdom*, p. 129, note 1; W.R. Telford, *Mark*, p. 24; R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium I*, p. 12, and notes 1 and 2; U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, p. 238. Cf. W. Marxsen, *Einleitung*, p. 148; I. Broer, *Einleitung*, pp. 86-87; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 6; H. Conzelmann, A. Lindemann, *Arbeitsbuch zum Neuen Testament* (UTB 52), Tübingen, 1998¹², p. 321.

Empire Greek was spoken. Their use was certainly not restricted to Rome.⁷⁸

Over the past decades the scholarly consensus on the Roman origin of Mark's Gospel has gradually fallen apart. A growing number of scholars now locate the composition of Mark's Gospel in Palestine⁷⁹ or Syria.⁸⁰ In this section I will argue that, in view of evidence found in the Gospel itself, it is indeed likely that the evangelist and his community were situated in Palestine, and more precisely in Galilee.

First, let us turn again to the so-called 'eschatological discourse' in Mk 13. In discussing the date of Mark's Gospel, the words αἱ ἡμέραι and νῦν in Mk 13:19 already gave me occasion to argue that Mk 13:14-23 reflects the actual situation of Mark's readers.⁸¹ Mk 13:14-23 was shown to have been written from a double perspective. In fact, this double perspective is characteristic of the entire eschatological discourse, Mk 13:5b-37. On one level the discourse in Mk 13 is a speech of Jesus to his disciples, on another it is Mark's encouragement to his contemporary readers who lived in the period after the Jewish War.⁸² In my view, Mk 13:14-23, if read on the latter level, can also shed light upon the issue of where Mark's Gospel was written.

A first clue can be found in Mk 13:21-22.⁸³ In vv. 21-22 Mark

⁷⁸ In support of the Gospel's alleged Roman origin, attention has been drawn especially to the clarifying κοδράντης in Mk 12:42, and παϊτώριον in Mk 15:16. J. Marcus argues convincingly, however, that in these verses 'Mark is not substituting western terms for eastern equivalents, but explaining imprecise Greek words by means of precise Latin ones.' Similarly, Marcus argues that the designation of the woman in Mk 7:26 as 'Syrophoenician' may not be meant for a Roman audience to specify that she is a particular kind of Phoenician, as some scholars suggest (e.g., M. Hengel, 'Entstehungszeit,' p. 45); it may rather be meant for a Syrian audience to specify that she is a particular kind of Syrian. See J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 32; idem, 'Jewish War,' pp. 443-446; see also G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit*, pp. 256-260.

⁷⁹ See above, note 3.

⁸⁰ See above, note 4.

⁸¹ See above, p. 91.

⁸² See also Chapter 1, pp. 55-72, esp. pp. 71-72. There, it was concluded that in Mk 13:9-13 the evangelist is also addressing the actual situation of his contemporary readers and encouraging them.

⁸³ Verse 21 has a parallel in Q 17:23 and derives from pre-Markan tradition. V. 22, however, is certainly Markan. This is apparent from the sentence's dual structure: ἐγερθήσονται ... ψευδοπροφήται is parallel to δώσουσιν ... τέρατα. Moreover, the two parallel clauses each have a dual structure in themselves; the first clause has a double subject (ψευδόχριστοι καὶ

mentions 'false prophets' and 'false messiahs,' who will arise in the period following the destruction of the temple. These prophets and messiahs will try to gain support among the people. Mark's expression 'false messiahs' probably refers to royal pretenders, that is persons who succeeded in mobilizing popular movements by claiming to be the future, ideal king of an Israel liberated from foreign occupants and enemies (χριστός, v. 21). Mark warns his readers against the seduction of such pretenders. Apparently, he considers them a threat to the Christian community for which he is writing.

Precisely the fact that Mark felt the need to warn his readers against new kingly pretenders suggests that the community he addressed was situated somewhere in Palestine. As far as we know, Palestine was the only region where Jews with ambitions to be king manifested themselves in the first century AD. From Josephus' works we know of several leaders with kingly ambitions who were active during the first century AD, also in the period during and after the Jewish Revolt, that is, in the period when Mark wrote his Gospel.⁸⁴ All of them were active in Palestine.⁸⁵ Mark's warning in vv. 21-22, therefore, seems to suggest that the community for which he wrote his Gospel was situated somewhere in Palestine.⁸⁶

An analysis of the structure of Mk 13:14-23 leads to a somewhat more specific conclusion as to the Gospel's place of origin. This section, vv. 14-23, is introduced by the phrase ὅταν δὲ ἴδῃτε ... δεῖ in v. 14a. The introductory phrase is resumed by τότε in v. 14b and again by καὶ τότε in v. 21. In this way the section is divided into two parts, vv. 14b-20 and vv. 21-23, both dependent on the temporal clause that refers to the destruction of the temple in v. 14a.⁸⁷ The first part of the

ψευδοπροφηταί), the second clause a double object (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα). See also F. Neirynck, *Duality*, pp. 109 and 132.

⁸⁴ For royal pretenders see, e.g., Josephus, *B.J.* III 433-434 and 441-448 (Menahem son of Judas the Galilean); *B.J.* IV 475 and 510 (Simon bar Giora); cf. the messianic expectations in *B.J.* VI 312-313. See also M. de Jonge, *Christology in Context. The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus*, Philadelphia, 1988, pp. 163-165; R.A. Horsley, J.S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs. Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus*, Minneapolis, 1985, pp. 110-131.

⁸⁵ The incident in Alexandria related by Philo, *In Flaccum* IV, does not concern someone with ambitions to be king. Here someone is dressed up as a king in order to insult king Agrippa I.

⁸⁶ Cf. J. Dupont, *Les trois apocalypses synoptiques. Marc 13; Matthieu 24-25; Luc 21* (LD 121), Paris, 1985, pp. 16-17.

⁸⁷ See A. Yarbro Collins, 'Mark 13,' p. 1134. See also above, note 47.

section, vv. 14b-20, depicts what will happen to 'the people in Judea' (οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ, v. 14b). The second part of the section, vv. 21-23, mentions what will happen to 'you' (ὁμῖν, v. 21), that is, from Jesus' perspective to the disciples, but from Mark's perspective to the Markan Christian community. Apparently, 'the people in Judea' and the Markan community are considered to be two different groups. The Markan community, then, was probably based in Palestine, but not in Judea.

The impression that the Gospel was not written for a community in Judea is corroborated if one takes account of the way Mark deals with the geography of the area. Mark's Gospel does not betray any detailed knowledge of Judaeian geography. Most of his references to places in the city of Jerusalem are rather vague. The author does not tell us, for instance, where the conversation between Jesus and Pilate took place (Mk 15:1-15), nor where 'the court, that is the Praetorium' was situated, where the soldiers mocked Jesus (Mk 15:16-20). The author's account of Jesus' preaching and acting in the Jerusalem temple in Mk 11:15-12:44 could have been written on the basis of general knowledge of ancient temples. No details are given, for instance, about which of the temple treasuries is meant in Mk 12:41-44,⁸⁸ or which of the two temple curtains in Mk 15:38.⁸⁹ It may be said that nothing in the Gospel suggests that Mark had anything more than general, superficial knowledge of the topography of Judea and Jerusalem.

In particular, the geographical references in Mk 11:1 show that the

⁸⁸ See also D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 211. The noun γαζοφυλάκιον means treasury chamber, see, e.g., Strabo, *Geographica* VII 6, 1; XI 14, 6; XII 5, 2; Josephus, *Ant.* XIII 429; in the LXX, e.g., in 2 Kings 23:11; Neh 10:37(38); 1 Macc 14:49; 2 Macc 3:6, 24, 28. In Mk 12:41-44 γαζοφυλάκιον has often been interpreted as meaning 'treasury box' (see, e.g., Bauer, s.v. γαζοφυλάκιον), because of the occurrence of the verb βάλλειν 'throwing' in vv. 41, 42, 43, and 44. This is also the interpretation in at least part of the early Christian tradition; see, e.g., John Chrysostom, *De pharisaeo*, ed. Migne, PG 59, 592, 45. Referring to the story of Mk 12:41-44, Chrysostom uses ρίπτειν. There is, however, no unequivocal evidence from sources contemporary with Mark that the word γαζοφυλάκιον was used for 'treasury box.' Moreover, the verb βάλλειν, just like καταβάλλειν, was used in the sense of 'deposit, pay,' see LSJ, s.v. βάλλειν II, 6, c and d. In Mk 12:41-44 βάλλειν probably means 'handing over money' to the priest in the temple who would accept the gift and register it. A close parallel is Mt 25:27 βάλλειν τὰ ἀργύρια τοῖς τραπεζίταις.

⁸⁹ On the two temple curtains, see above, note 73.

author probably did not know Judea from experience.⁹⁰ In Mk 11:1 the evangelist has Jesus, on his way from Jericho to Jerusalem, stop before reaching Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives to secure an animal from either of the two villages in order to ride into the City. Mk 11:1 should be paraphrased 'And when they approached Jerusalem, more precisely, Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples' Mark's description of Jesus' route in Mk 11:1, however, is rather improbable.

Firstly, one would have expected the villages to be mentioned in the order 'Bethany and Bethphage,' for, as far as we know, Bethphage was a suburb of Jerusalem⁹¹ and was situated closer to the city than Bethany.⁹² Secondly, the evangelist assumes that Bethphage and Bethany were situated on the Mount of Olives on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. This assumption, however, is probably incorrect. If the generally accepted identification of Bethany with the present-day village of el-'Azariyeh is correct,⁹³ Bethany was indeed situated on the Mount of Olives, as Mark says, but not on the ancient road from Jericho to Jerusalem.

The village of Bethany was probably situated on the south-east slope of the Mount of Olives. The main road from Jericho to Jerusa-

⁹⁰ See also H. Conzelmann, A. Lindemann, *Arbeitsbuch*, p. 320; K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' p. 181.

⁹¹ The exact location of Bethphage is unknown, but it is generally held to have been a suburb of Jerusalem. J. Finegan, for instance, argues that the Bethphage in the Gospels is identical with the Beth Page mentioned a number of times in Talmudic Literature. There the wall of Beth Page is considered to define the limits of Jerusalem (e.g., Babylonian Talmud *Pesahim* 63b; transl. L. Goldschmidt, Berlin, 1930, vol. 2, p. 499). See J. Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament. The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church*, Princeton, 1992 (revised edition), p. 163.

⁹² See also K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' p. 181 and note 43; E. Lohse, *Die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments* (ThW 4), Stuttgart, 2001⁶, p. 86. Robert H. Gundry's attempt to account for the peculiar order of the names Bethphage and Bethany in Mk 11:1 by pointing to the reference in Mk 10:1 is not convincing. In Mk 10:1 there are only two geographical names, the former designating the goal, the latter the route, while in Mk 11:1 there are three names, the first designating the goal, then two names designating the route, but in reverse order. Against R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, pp. 529 and 623-624.

⁹³ For this identification, see, e.g., Y. Tsafrir, L. DiSegni, J. Green, *Tabula imperii romani. Iudaea, Palestina. Eretz Israel in the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Periods*, Jerusalem, 1994, the map 'Iudaea, Palestine: North' and p. 80; J. Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament*, pp. 156-157; L.H. Grollenberg, *Atlas van de Bijbel*, Amsterdam/Brussel, 1954², p. 144 and map 34; B. Schwank, art. 'Bet(h)anien,' *LThK* II, col. 332; H. Bloedhorn, art. 'Bethanien,' *RGG* I, col. 1375; cf. L.J. Perkins, art. 'Bethany,' *ABD* I, pp. 702-703, esp. p. 703.

lem, on the other hand, passed north of the Mount of Olives. It came up over the ridge that lies east of Jerusalem, between the Mount of Olives and the most northern summit of the ridge, the present Ras el-Mesharif.⁹⁴ Anybody who travelled from Jericho to Jerusalem approached Jerusalem from the north-east leaving the Mount of Olives and Bethany on his left.⁹⁵ Bethany was connected with Jerusalem by another road running south of the Mount of Olives. Therefore, when Mark has Jesus and his disciples pass through Bethany on their way from Jericho to Jerusalem, he seems to depict an awkward route. The implausibility of this itinerary, together with the peculiar order of 'Bethphage and Bethany' in Mk 11:1, suggests that the evangelist was not familiar with the route between Jericho and Jerusalem, nor with the neighbourhood of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.⁹⁶ Consequently, the Gospel is not likely to have been written in Judea.

The area of the Decapolis is not likely to have been the home of the Markan community either, for the author seems to be unacquainted with the geographical situation of the Transjordan region. Compelling evidence for this is Mark's story in Mk 5:1-20 about Jesus healing a man who is possessed by an unclean spirit.

In the previous chapters Jesus has been preaching and healing in and around Capernaum, on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee. In Mk 5:1 the evangelist has Jesus and his disciples cross the lake to 'the other side of the lake,' more precisely 'to the country of the Gerasenes' (v. 1). There, Jesus heals a demoniac. He drives out the demons and sends them into a herd of swine that are feeding nearby (v. 13). When the unclean spirits enter the swine, they rush down the

⁹⁴ This is the Mount Scopus mentioned by Josephus in, e.g., *B.J.* V 67; 106; 108. See in Y. Tsafir, *et al.*, *Tabula imperii romani*, the map 'Iudaea, Palestine: North.' This map shows clearly that the Roman road approaches Jerusalem from the north-east, running a few kilometres north of Bethany. Parts of the road and some Roman milestones have been found there. See also L.H. Grollenberg, *Atlas van de Bijbel*, pp. 69 and 115, and map 33; J. Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament*, p. 152.

⁹⁵ See also E. Lohse, *Entstehung*, p. 86.

⁹⁶ D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 188 remarks that Mk 11:1 is meant as a preparatory verse introducing the events that will be related in the following chapters. In Mk 11:1 the evangelist is simply mentioning all the places that were to play a part in the narrative about Jesus' ministry in Judea: Bethany is the place of the anointment in Mk 14:3-9, and the Mount of Olives is the scene of Mk 13 and Mk 14:26-31; Bethphage, which is not mentioned again in Mark, may reflect pre-Markan tradition. Lührmann's observations may be correct. This does not, however, alter the fact that Mark's presentation of the geographical situation is clumsy.

steep bank into the lake and are drowned (v. 13). The swineherds run off and tell the people in the city and in the country what has happened (v. 14). As a result the inhabitants of the area beg Jesus to leave the place (v. 17). Thereupon, Jesus leaves the area, once he has incited the healed man to tell the people all that had happened to him (v. 19). Then the man starts preaching in the Decapolis (v. 20).

This story in Mk 5 shows that the evangelist did not know where exactly Gerasa was situated.⁹⁷ According to Mk 5:13 the herd of swine, which were feeding in the Gerasene area, rushed into the sea. According to v. 14 Gerasa was so close to the sea that the swineherds could run into the city to report what had happened to the demoniac. In Mark's view, then, the territory of Gerasa stretched to the Sea of Galilee, and Gerasa itself was not far from the coast. In reality, however, Gerasa was situated about 55 kilometres from the Galilean Sea, to the south-east. The Gerasene territory did not reach down to the lake, but was separated from it by the territories of two other cities, namely Gadara and Hippos.⁹⁸

On the basis of the story in Mk 5:1-20 we may conclude that the evangelist was not familiar with the geography of the Transjordan area. This area, that is, the Decapolis and Perea, is not likely to have been the place where Mark wrote his Gospel.

We have seen so far that in all probability Mark's Gospel originated in Palestine, but neither Judea nor Transjordan seems to fit the bill. Nor is there anything which points to Samaria as the Gospel's place of origin: Samaria and the Samaritans do not occur in Mark at all.

⁹⁷ See also K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' pp. 178-179; G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit*, pp. 253-254; E. Best, *Mark. The Gospel as Story*, Edinburgh, 1983, p. 26.

⁹⁸ See Josephus, *Vita* 42. To the west the territories of Gadara and Hippos reached to the borders of the territories of Tiberias and Skythopolis. To the north-west, the territory of Gadara certainly reached down to the Sea of Galilee, as can be concluded from Gadarene coins portraying a ship; see E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *History* II, p. 136. Mark's geographical mistake in Mk 5:1 accounts for the profusion of textual variants in the manuscripts. Γερασηνῶν must be considered the *lectio difficillima*. The alternative readings Γαδαρηνῶν and Γεργεσηνῶν which occur in some of the manuscripts, can best be understood as attempts to solve the geographical problem of the original reading Γερασηνῶν. A similar text-critical confusion reigns in the parallel passages Mt 8:28 and Lk 8:26. See also B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament. A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (fourth revised edition)*, Stuttgart, 1994², p. 72; cf. pp. 18-19 and 121; K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' p. 179 and note 29; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 99; against J. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 202.

The only possibility that seems to remain is that Mark's Gospel and community had their origin and home in Galilee. In my view, there are indeed several clues in the Gospel which suggest that it was written in Galilee.

First of all, it should be noted that Mark shows a special interest in Galilee. Apart from the stories about Jesus healing and preaching in Galilee in Mk 1-10, this region plays a remarkable role in Mk 14-16. In my opinion, the Markan interest in Galilee in these chapters is an indication that Mark's Gospel was meant for a Christian community in Galilee.⁹⁹

At the end of the Gospel, in Mk 15:40-41, the evangelist introduces three Galilean women: Mary from Magdala, Mary the mother of James the younger and Joses, and Salome. The introduction of the women in Mk 15:40-41 is remarkable. None of them has been mentioned before in the Gospel. Nor is the reason for their appearance in Mk 15 immediately clear. The only thing they do is stand at a distance and watch how Jesus dies. The author, however, carefully explains who they are and what their relationship to Jesus is: they are Galilean women who took care of Jesus during his ministry in Galilee, and like other Galilean women came with him to Jerusalem. Two of them appear again in Mk 15:47. Their appearance here is also remarkable, for again the only thing they do is watch. Mk 15:47 tells us only that the women see where Joseph of Arimathea lays Jesus' body.

The reason why Mark introduces the women in Mk 15:40-41 and 47 becomes clear in the following story, in Mk 16. The fact that according to Mk 15:47 they saw where Jesus' body was laid now proves to be important. In order to be able to anoint his body, they needed to know, of course, in which tomb he had been buried. The mention of the women in Mk 15:40-41 and 47 is meant to convince the readers that they were not mistaken in identifying the tomb they found empty as the one in which Jesus had been buried. Mk 15:40-41 and 47, then, have a preparatory function: they are intended to guarantee the reliability of the story about the empty tomb in Mk 16 and the reality of Jesus' bodily resurrection.

Mark's interest in the women as those who attested the reality of

⁹⁹ Cf. W.R. Telford, *Mark*, p. 25; idem, *Theology*, p. 14.

Jesus' resurrection, and the great care with which he prepares their role as adequate witnesses in Mk 15:40-41 and 47, strongly suggests that Mk 15:40-41 and 47 are due to Mark's redaction. This conclusion is affirmed by the occurrence of stylistic features typical of Mark's redaction in both passages.¹⁰⁰

The observation that the occurrence and role of the three Galilean women in Mk 15 are due to Mark's redactional intervention raises the question of why the evangelist is so intent on presenting the women as witnesses to the empty tomb. The answer must be that Mark was aware that the story of the empty tomb, in order to be credible, still needed to be attested by some unimpeachable witnesses. The story about the empty tomb is not found in the Christian tradition prior to Mark. It is likely that the story in Mk 16 is not much older than Mark, if not an invention of the evangelist himself. In order to convince his readers of the reliability of the story, Mark, who had had the disciples flee in Mk 14:50, carefully introduced the three female eyewitnesses. He took care that they were qualified witnesses by including Mk 15:40-41 and 47. Moreover, Mark added an element to his narrative to explain why the empty tomb story had been unknown until his day. This was, according to Mk 16:8, because the women 'said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.'¹⁰¹

Why, then, did Mark chose Galilean women as witnesses for his story about the empty tomb? Probably Mark viewed the anointing of the dead as typically a task for women. Consequently, if Mark wanted the tomb to be found by witnesses, women who went there to anoint the body were the most obvious and the least suspicious candidates. The fact that Mark took women who had come from Galilee can best be accounted for by assuming that Galilee was the place where the author lived. The three female witnesses who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem are no doubt supposed by Mark to have returned home after Jesus' death. Of course, in Mark's view, they took their secrets about Jesus' resurrection with them to Galilee.

¹⁰⁰ For the instances of typically Markan duality in Mk 15:40-41, see F. Neirynck, *Duality*, pp. 76, 81, 97, 108, 110, and 112; for ἀπὸ μακρόθεν as a Markan favourite term, see J.C. Hawkins, *Horae synopticae. Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*, Oxford, 1909² (reprint 1968), p. 12. Against, e.g., D. Lüthmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 264 and 268, who considers vv. 40 and 47 as part of a pre-Markan passion narrative.

¹⁰¹ See also W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos. Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus* (FRLANT 21, neue Folge 4), Göttingen, 1921², p. 65.

Galilee is the region where, Mark suggests, he could pick up the tradition about the empty tomb. The Galilean witnesses, then, are introduced as guarantor of the reliability of the story about the empty tomb, and as Mark's source. Mark's choice of witnesses from Galilee is, in my view, best explained by supposing that the evangelist lived there.

The introduction of the women in Mk 15:40-41 calls for further comment still. One of the women is called 'Mary, the mother of James the younger and Joses' (Mk 15:40). The clarifying addition 'the mother of James the younger and Joses' is meant as a clue for the reader to enable him or her to identify this Mary. Apparently the author expects his readers to know James the younger and Joses, since there is no point in identifying an unknown person by referring to others who are also unknown. It is likely, therefore, that the two sons of the second Galilean Mary were known to the Markan community, or are at least presented here as known, or formerly known to them. This, again, links the Markan community with Galilee.

In sum, it is plausible that the inclusion of the three Galilean women introduced in the narrative of Mk 15 and 16 is an indication that the Gospel was written in Galilee, and for a Galilean community.

In Mark's account of the women's visit to the empty tomb in Mk 16, there is another remarkable reference to Galilee that reinforces the hypothesis that Mark's Gospel was written there. In Mk 16:7 the young man in the tomb says to the women: 'Go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee;¹⁰² there you will see him, just as he told you.' The young man's words recall Jesus' words as related in Mk 14:28. In Mk 14:27-28 Jesus tells his disciples that they 'will all be made to stumble' and 'will be scattered' as a result of his death (v. 27). 'But,' Jesus says, 'after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee' (v. 28).

Jesus' promise in Mk 14:28 and the young man's exhortation to the women in Mk 16:7 suggest that, in Mark's view, after Jesus' death the contact between Jesus and the disciples continued in Galilee.¹⁰³ The wording προάγειν ὑμᾶς (Mk 14:28 and 16:7) conveys the

¹⁰² There is no reason to suppose that the 'you' of 'ahead of you' in Mk 16:7 does not include the women themselves.

¹⁰³ See also D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 271.

notion that the disciples went back to Galilee after Jesus' resurrection to meet their Lord there. Galilee, then, is presented by Mark as the place where Jesus will appear to his disciples,¹⁰⁴ and where the disciples will live on as Christians and preachers of the gospel. The relevance of Galilee in Mark's Gospel as the place to which the tradition about Jesus is transferred and where it is transmitted suggests that there was a special relation between Galilee and the Gospel's author who carries on this tradition. Mark's choice of Galilee as the place from where the Christian message will be spread after Jesus' death is explained most naturally and easily by supposing that the evangelist and his community were living in Galilee.¹⁰⁵

Another argument in favour of the view that the Markan community was situated in Galilee is constituted by the geographical information contained in the Gospel. Several scholars have argued that Mark's Gospel cannot have been written by someone from Palestine because of errors they claim it contains regarding the Palestinian geography.¹⁰⁶ Assuredly, some of Mark's references to places in Judea and Transjordan have been shown to be geographically awkward or wrong. However, it will be shown presently that Mark's references to places in Galilee all prove to be geographically adequate.

Mark's description of the geographical setting of the stories about Jesus healing and preaching in and around Capernaum in Mk 1-4 is faultless. In Mk 1:16-4:1 the evangelist has Jesus walk up and down between the village of Capernaum and the Galilean Sea. This picture corresponds with the ancient situation of the village, for Capernaum was in all probability situated on the coast of the Sea of Galilee, on the north-west coast, to be precise.¹⁰⁷ It is likely, therefore, that peo-

¹⁰⁴ According to some scholars Mark's phrase 'you will see him' in Mk 16:7 refers to Jesus' parousia (see E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, p. 356; W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus*, pp. 53-54). This interpretation is untenable for it implies that Peter would live to witness the parousia. In all probability, however, when Mark wrote his Gospel, Peter had already died. Consequently, Mark cannot have meant 'you will see him' as referring to the parousia. See also R.H. Stein, 'A Short Note on Mark XIV, 28 and XVI, 7,' *NTS* 20 (1974), pp. 445-452.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, pp. 386-387.

¹⁰⁶ See K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' pp. 177-183; H. Conzelmann, A. Lindemann, *Arbeitsbuch*, p. 320. Cf. D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 6; W.R. Telford, *Mark*, pp. 19 and 25; E. Best, *The Gospel as Story*, p. 26; I. Broer, *Einleitung*, p. 88.

¹⁰⁷ For the identification of Capernaum see, e.g., S. Loffreda, art. 'Capernaum,' in E. Stern,

ple regularly walked the short distance between the centre of the village and the lake, as Jesus does in Mark's story.

A reference concerning Galilee that seems to be problematic occurs in the story about Jesus walking on water in Mk 6:45-52. Kurt Niederwimmer argues that the mention of Bethsaida in Mk 6:45 shows that Mark did not know that this village was located on the north-east coast of the lake.¹⁰⁸ The setting of the preceding story, that is, the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand in Mk 6:30-44, is, according to Niederwimmer, the east side of the lake.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly, Niederwimmer considers the evangelist's remark in Mk 6:45 that the disciples were heading for Bethsaida by crossing the lake 'to the opposite side' (εἰς τὸ πέραν, v. 45) to be mistaken, because both Bethsaida and the supposed location of the feeding miracle were on the same side, that is, the east side of the lake.¹¹⁰ From a careful analysis of the geographical references in Mk 6, however, it will become clear that Mark locates the feeding miracle in Mk 6:30-44 not on the east coast of the lake, but on the west coast.

In Mk 6:1 the evangelist has Jesus and his disciples go to his home town Nazareth which lies near Sepphoris.¹¹¹ In Mk 6:14-16, where Mark has Antipas identify Jesus as John the Baptist raised from the death, the scene is still Galilee. It is true that, historically, Antipas was a tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea. However, Mark seems to know him only as a king of Galilee and locates him there: the mention of 'the leaders of Galilee' as the guests at Antipas' birthday banquet in Mk 6:21 indicates that, in Mark's view, the banquet and the death of John the Baptist took place in Galilee.¹¹² Mark probably thought of

et al. (edd.), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Jerusalem, 1993, pp. 291-296, esp. pp. 291-292; J. Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament*, p. 97; V.C. Corbo, art. 'Capernaum,' *ABD* I, pp. 866-869, esp. p. 866.

¹⁰⁸ K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' p. 179. Cf. V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 327; W.R. Telford, *Mark*, p. 19. For the location of Bethsaida, see, e.g., J. Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament*, pp. 113-114.

¹⁰⁹ See also, e.g., V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, pp. 318-319; J. Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Marci*, Berlin, 1903, pp. 50 and 54.

¹¹⁰ In some of the manuscripts the phrase εἰς τὸ πέραν is omitted, perhaps as an attempt to solve the alleged geographical problem of Mk 6:45. The longer text including εἰς τὸ πέραν, however, is probably the original reading, for it is the *lectio difficilior*. See also B.M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*², p. 79. Cf. V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 327.

¹¹¹ Mark mentions Nazareth as Jesus' home town in Mk 1:9.

¹¹² According to Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII 119, John the Baptist was killed in the stronghold Machaerus in Peraea. This should not necessarily lead us to conclude that the story in Mk 6:17-

Tiberias as the place where Antipas resided, for Antipas is known to have built a palace there, which was demolished in 66 AD, some years before Mark wrote his Gospel.¹¹³

After relating the story about John the Baptist's death in Mk 6:17-29, in Mk 6:30 the evangelist resumes the line of his narrative about Jesus in Galilee, although not in Nazareth where he had left Jesus in Mk 6:13, but on the coast of the lake, as is apparent from Mk 6:32 (ἀπῆλθον ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ). Unfortunately, Mark has failed to tell his readers that Jesus came from Nazareth to the coast of the lake, but it is not difficult to see how this could happen if one realizes that Mark seems to have located the whole scene of Antipas' birthday and John the Baptist's death in Tiberias, which was situated on the west coast of the lake.

The feeding of the five thousand, which is related in the next passage, Mk 6:35-44, also takes place somewhere on the west coast of the lake. In Mk 6:32 it is said that Jesus and the disciples 'went away' (ἀπῆλθον) in the boat to a deserted place, not that they crossed the lake to the other side.¹¹⁴ Thus in Mk 6:32, and still in Mk 6:45, Jesus and his disciples are thought to be on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee, at a quiet place somewhere in the vicinity of Tiberias. From there the disciples head by ship for Bethsaida which is indeed, as Mk 6:45 says, on the other side, i.e. on the north-east coast of the lake. The geographical reference in Mk 6:45, therefore, proves to be correct. The view that Mk 6:45 contains a geographical error is based on a misinterpretation of the word ἀπῆλθον in Mk 6:32.¹¹⁵

Now that it has become clear that in Mk 6:45 the disciples are thought to sail from the west coast of the lake in the direction of Bethsaida on the north-east coast, the setting of the rest of the story of Mk 6:45-52 is also understandable. The disciples set off in a boat on their own. When they are halfway, in the middle of the lake, Jesus catches up with them (v. 48). From the point where they meet they

29 is also set there. Mark's story about John's death is very different from Josephus' account. Most of all, a location in Machaerus cannot account for the mention of only the 'leaders of Galilee' as the guests at Antipas' banquet (Mk 6:21).

¹¹³ Josephus, *Vita* 65-66.

¹¹⁴ In describing crossings of the lake, Mark's Gospel usually uses the phrase εἰς τὸ πέραν; see Mk 4:35; 5:1, 21; 6:45; 8:13.

¹¹⁵ This happened no doubt under the influence of Jn 6:1: 'Jesus went to the other side of (πέραν) the Sea of Galilee.'

cross the water to the coast and end up in Gennesaret (v. 53). Gennesaret was probably situated on the north-west coast of the Sea of Galilee, about halfway between Tiberias and Bethsaida.¹¹⁶ The movements of Jesus and the disciples in Mk 6:45-52 are perfectly compatible, therefore, with the geography of the area around the Galilean Sea.

In Mk 7:23 Mark has Jesus leave Gennesaret and travel to Tyre, in Mk 7:24-30,¹¹⁷ and the Decapolis, in Mk 7:31-8:9. Some scholars have called attention to the strange route Mark says Jesus took from Tyre to the Decapolis in Mk 7:31 as an indication that Mark did not know the exact geographical situation of Galilee.¹¹⁸ But far from being an indication that Mark did not know the situation in Galilee, Mk 7:31 shows rather that he was not aware of the location of Sidon.

In Mk 7:31 the evangelist has Jesus go 'from the region of Tyre, ... by way of Sidon'¹¹⁹ towards the Sea of Galilee, to the middle of the

¹¹⁶ For the identification of ancient Gennesaret, see, e.g., V. Fritz, art. 'Tel Chinnereth,' in E. Stern, et al. (edd.), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Jerusalem, 1993, pp. 299-301, esp. p. 299.

¹¹⁷ According to some of the manuscripts, in Mk 7:24 Mark has Jesus go to 'the region of Tyre and Sidon' (Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος). This longer reading is probably due to influence from the Matthean parallel of Mk 7:24, namely Mt 15:21. See also B.M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*², p. 82.

¹¹⁸ See H.C. Kee, *Community of the New Age*, p. 103; K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' pp. 180-181; E. Best, *The Gospel as Story*, p. 26; H. Räisänen, *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark's Gospel* (transl. C.M. Tuckett), Edinburgh, 1990, p. 153; cf. G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit*, pp. 254-256. However, these scholars do not agree on the exact route depicted in Mk 7:31, nor on what is strange about it. Kee, Theissen, and Best, on the one hand, believe that Jesus is thought to go from Tyre through Sidon and the Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee; this route is considered awkward because it has Jesus travel first eastwards to the Decapolis and then back to the lake. Räisänen, on the other hand, takes ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν ὁρίων Δεκαπόλεως to mean 'in the middle of the region of the Decapolis' and believes that this phrase is meant to clarify the situation of the Sea of Galilee; the reference is, then, considered to contradict the geographical situation because, in reality, the Sea of Galilee was not situated in the middle of the Decapolis, but on its west border. In my view, both these positions are based on an incorrect understanding of the preposition ἀνὰ. According to LSJ, s.v. ἀνὰ, C I, the preposition ἀνὰ + accusative means 'up,' 'up along,' or 'up to.' According to Bauer, s.v. ἀνὰ, I a, the phrase ἀνὰ μέσον + genitive means 'to the middle of.' The preposition ἀνὰ in Mk 7:31, then, does not mean 'through' or 'in,' but 'to.' The references in Mk 7:31 are awkward because Mark has Jesus first travel north to Sidon and, subsequently, south again to the Sea of Galilee (cf. K. Niederwimmer).

¹¹⁹ In Mk 7:31 some of the manuscripts read 'from the region of Tyre and Sidon' (ἐκ τῶν ὁρίων Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος). This reading is probably due to an attempt to solve the geographical problem. The reading διὰ Σιδῶνος is the *lectio difficilior* and therefore probably the original reading. See also B.M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*², p. 82.

Decapolis.' For someone travelling from the coastal area—where Jesus went in Mk 7:24—'up to the middle of the area of Decapolis' (Mk 7:31), a route via the Galilean Sea is by no means unlikely.¹²⁰ The only reason why the route mentioned in Mk 7:31 seems awkward is that it includes Sidon, which was situated much further north than the evangelist seems to realize.¹²¹ Jesus' awkward route in Mk 7:31, then, is not due to any lack of knowledge on Mark's part as to where the Galilean Sea was situated, but solely to his not knowing exactly how Sidon was situated in relation to Tyre and the Sea of Galilee.¹²²

As from Mk 8:10, Jesus is back in Galilee. Mark's references to places in Galilee in Mk 8-9 are all geographically sound. In Mk 8:10 the evangelist has Jesus cross the lake from the area of the Decapolis to the west coast of the lake. From there he sails 'back to the other side' (v. 13), and attains Bethsaida on the north-east coast of the lake (v. 22). From Bethsaida one could easily travel to the area of Caesarea Philippi, following the main road along the river Jordan,¹²³ as Jesus is probably thought to do in Mk 8:27. After Peter's confession (Mk 8:27-9:1), the transfiguration (Mk 9:2-13), and the healing of a boy possessed by a spirit (Mk 9:14-29), Jesus comes back from the area of Caesarea Philippi to Capernaum in Mk 9:30-33. This time, however, he takes a route 'through Galilee,' that is to say, west of the river Jordan. Mark suggests that Jesus avoids the main road in order to travel alone with his disciples (v. 30). All the geographical references in the section Mk 8:10-9:50 are eminently in accordance with the geography of ancient Galilee.

From our analysis of Jesus' route through Galilee as depicted in

¹²⁰ See the attested and inferred roads in, e.g., Y. Tsafir, *et al.*, *Tabula imperii romani*, the map 'Iudaea, Palestine: North.'

¹²¹ The mention of Sidon in Mk 7:31 may be due to the fact that Tyre and Sidon were often associated with each other (see, e.g., Mk 3:8 par.; Mt 11:21-22/Lk 10:13-14 twice; Mt 15:21). See also D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 132, who rightly remarks that 'Tyros und Sidon bilden ein altes bekanntes Zwillingenpaar; wer Tyros nannte, musste auch Sidon erwähnen.' Cf. K. Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus,' p. 181.

¹²² G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit*, pp. 254-257 considers Mk 7:31 and Mk 5:1 arguments for a location of the Markan community in southern Syria. The fact that Mark does not know how Tyre and Sidon were situated in relation to one another makes this view unlikely.

¹²³ For the identification of Caesarea Philippi and the route of the main road between this city and the Galilean Sea, see, e.g., Y. Tsafir, *et al.*, *Tabula imperii romani*, the map 'Iudaea, Palestine: North.'

Mark's Gospel, we may safely conclude that Mark was well informed about the Galilean geography.

Not only is Mark's knowledge of Galilee accurate, it is also rather detailed. Let us turn again to the Galilean women in Mk 15 and 16. One of the women is called Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνή (Mk 15:40, 47; 16:1).¹²⁴ Μαγδαληνή means 'from Magdala'.¹²⁵ Most authors on the subject agree that Magdala was a Galilean village near, or possibly identical with, a town called Tarichaeae, which lay between Tiberias and Gennesaret on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee.¹²⁶ It is remarkable that the name Magdala is not found anywhere outside Mark or writings influenced by Mark.¹²⁷ This suggests that Magdala was not an important place, or at least that the word Magdala was not well-known as the name of a village otherwise called Tarichaeae. Mark, however, not only uses the derivative Μαγδαληνή three times, he also does not deem it necessary ever to clarify the word. Obviously Mark was familiar with the region in question and supposed his readers to be so as well.¹²⁸

A similar conclusion can be drawn from Mark's use of the name Dalmanoutha in Mk 8:10.¹²⁹ A place called Dalmanoutha is not at-

¹²⁴ It has already been argued that the mention of Mary of Magdala in Mk 15:40, 15:47, and 16:1 is certainly due to Mark's redaction; see above, pp. 101-102.

¹²⁵ Cf. Γαδαρηνός, from Γάδαρα Mt 8:28, Mk 5:1 v.l., and Lk 8:26 v.l.; Γεργεσηνός, from Γέργεσα Mt 8:28 v.l., Mk 5:1 v.l. and Lk 8:26 v.l. and Lk 8:37 v.l.; Γερασσηνός, from Γέρασα Mt 8:28 v.l., Mk 5:1, and Lk 8:26, 37; Ναζαρηνός, from Ναζαρά Mt 4:13 and Lk 4:16; Ἀβιληνή Lk 3:1, from Ἀβίλα.

¹²⁶ Magdala, 'Tower,' is generally identified with the Talmudic Migdal Nūnnaya, 'Tower of Fish' (Babylonian Talmud *Pesahim* 46a; transl. L. Goldschmidt, Berlin, 1930, vol. 2, p. 443), which lies approximately one mile north of Tiberias. The identification of Magdala with the place called Tarichaeae (mentioned several times by Josephus; see, e.g., *B.J.* II 634-635; 641; III 443-502) is based on the fact that Magdala Tarichaeae would mean 'Tower of Fish,' like the Talmudic Migdal Nūnnaya. See, e.g., J. F. Strange, art. 'Magdala,' *ABD* IV, pp. 463-464.

¹²⁷ The name Magdala occurs as a reading of many witnesses in Mt 15:39 and as that of several witnesses in Mk 8:10.

¹²⁸ See also W.R. Telford, *Mark*, p. 25; idem, *Theology*, p. 14: 'In favour of ... Galilee ... is his [i.e. Mark's] use of Galilean and Judaeian place-names throughout without explanation.'

¹²⁹ Δαλμανουθά is almost certainly the original reading. This reading is supported by virtually all uncials. Moreover, since Dalmanoutha is an unknown name, the rise of the variant readings Μαγεδά(ν) and Μαγδαλά, in Mk 8:10 as well as in Mt 15:39, is no surprise. See also B.M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*³, p. 83; cf. pp. 32-33. The occurrence of the Markan favourite word εὐθύς and the mention of the boat (cf., e.g., Mk 4:1, 36; 5:2, 18; 6:32) indicate that Mk 8:10 is due to Markan redaction; see D. Lüthmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 134.

tested anywhere else. From Mk 8:10 one cannot glean any more information about the place than that it was situated somewhere on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee. The variant readings in the manuscripts confirm that, as a placename, Dalmanoutha was unknown. Scribes altered Dalmanoutha to Magdala, or under the influence of the Matthean parallel (Mt 15:39) to Mageda(n), not to mention further sub-variants. Although Dalmanoutha was obviously not generally known, Mark does nothing to clarify its situation. Apparently he presumes that his readers will know which place he had in mind.

The way Mark deals with Magdala and Dalmanoutha leads us to the conclusion that Mark supposed his readers to be familiar with Galilean placenames that were not generally known. The evangelist and his readers, then, have a more than general knowledge of the topography of Galilee, and are likely to live there.

Two further remarks need to be made. As an argument against the location of the Markan community in Palestine scholars have often adduced the fact that Mark adds translations in Greek to the Hebrew and Aramaic phrases he uses, and explains many of the Jewish customs he mentions.¹³⁰ These scholars conclude that the evangelist wrote his work for a gentile community living outside Palestine. The evidence, however, does not bear out this conclusion. The fact that the author translates Hebrew and Aramaic phrases and explains Jewish customs indicates merely that he reckoned with the possibility that his readers included non-Jewish Christians, as well as people who did not know Hebrew or Aramaic. In a Christian community in Galilee this possibility was certainly not imaginary.

It must be remembered that in first-century Galilee Greek was the *lingua franca* among both Jews and non-Jews. Although in Palestine Greek was initially the language of the administration, spoken mainly by the urban people, it eventually became the main language of the area, while Hebrew and Aramaic became minority languages.¹³¹ In Galilee Greek was pervasive especially in the area of the Galilean

¹³⁰ E.g., U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, p. 237; I. Broer, *Einleitung*, p. 87; cf. W.R. Telford, *Mark*, p. 19.

¹³¹ See D. Edwards, 'The Socio-Economic and Cultural Ethos of the Lower Galilee in the First Century. Implications for the Nascent Jesus Movement,' in L.I. Levine (ed.), *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge Mass./London, 1992, pp. 53-73, esp. pp. 68-72; E.M. Meyers, J. Strange, *Archeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity*, London, 1981, pp. 78-88 and 90-91.

Sea, and in hellenized cities like Tiberias and Sepphoris. But Greek ostraca and inscriptions found in geographically isolated village areas in Upper Galilee indicate that people had at least some knowledge of Greek even there.¹³² Jan N. Sevenster argues convincingly that in first-century Palestine Greek was spoken not only by upper-class people, but also by those who belonged to the lower strata of Galilean society.¹³³ The dominance of Greek compared to Hebrew and Aramaic accounts sufficiently for the Greek translations of Hebrew and Aramaic phrases in Mark's Gospel. Not all Galileans could be expected to have an extensive knowledge of these languages, and there were certainly people among them who spoke only Greek. The fact that Mark translates Hebrew and Aramaic phrases in the Gospel is not a valid argument, therefore, against locating the Markan community in Galilee.

The explanations Mark gives of some Jewish traditions are also not a valid objection to locating Mark and his audience in Galilee.¹³⁴ The population of Galilee in the first century AD was certainly not exclusively Jewish. First-century Galilee is now generally believed to have had a mixed population of Jews and non-Jews. In any case, first-century Christian communities in Galilee certainly included non-Jewish members. Some of these gentile Christians may not have had any great knowledge of Jewish religious traditions. It is very possible that the presence of such less informed gentile Christians among his

¹³² See D. Edwards, 'Socio-Economic and Cultural Ethos,' p. 69.

¹³³ J.N. Sevenster, *Do you know Greek? How much Greek could the First Jewish Christians have known?* (Supplements to NT 19), Leiden, 1968. See also G. Mussies, 'Greek in Palestine and the Diaspora,' in S. Safrai, M. Stern, et al. (edd.), *The Jewish People in the First Century. Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural, and Religious Life and Institutions* (CRINT section 1) II, Assen, 1976, pp. 1040-1064; S. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 BCE to 135 CE. A Study of Second Temple Judaism*, Edinburgh, 1980, esp. pp. 139-141; D. Edwards, 'Socio-Economic and Cultural Ethos', p. 71; H.C. Kee, 'Early Christianity in the Galilee. Reassessing the Evidence from the Gospels,' in L.I. Levine (ed.), *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge Mass./London, 1992, pp. 3-22, esp. pp. 20-22.

¹³⁴ See, e.g. the explanatory passages Mk 7:2 and 14:42. In some cases, it is not necessary to suppose that Mark is clarifying his narrative specifically for gentile readers. In Mk 2:26 the phrase 'which is not lawful for any but the priest to eat' is perfectly understandable as an element of the narrative; Mark is just trying to stress the sinfulness of Abiathar's behaviour. In Mk 7:3-4 Mark depicts the Pharisees' tendency to wash all and everything with clear exaggeration, in order to accentuate their moral deficiency. In Mk 14:12 the phrase 'when the Passover lamb is sacrificed' is a useful characterization of the evening at issue, in preparation for Mark's narrative of the Last Supper.

addressees induced Mark to clarify certain Jewish traditions in his Gospel.¹³⁵

The second remark I wish to make concerns the persecution of the Markan Christians as mentioned in Mk 13:9. In the previous chapter I argued that Mk 13:9 reflects the actual situation of Mark's community. The Markan Christians are believed to live under the threat of persecutions because of their adherence to the Christian movement. According to Mk 13:9 they are persecuted by Jews in leading positions (συνέδρια καὶ συναγωγαί, v. 9), and brought before secular courts in order to be condemned. The secular authorities before whom the Christians will have to defend themselves are designated more specifically as ἡγεμόνες καὶ βασιλεῖς, 'governors and kings.' It can be argued that this designation of the civil authorities in Mk 13:9 is particularly apt if, as argued above, the evangelist's readership is situated in Galilee.

When Mark wrote his Gospel, the region of Galilee was divided into two parts. The eastern part of Galilee, that is, the whole western coast of the Sea of Galilee including Tiberias and Tarichaeae with their surrounding districts, belonged to the realm of king Agrippa II. It had been added to Agrippa's kingdom by Emperor Nero in 61 AD,¹³⁶ and thus came under the same rule as the areas east of the Galilean Sea, *inter alia* Batanaea, Trachonitis, and Gaulanitis. Eastern Galilee remained part of Agrippa's kingdom until his death in 92 or 93 AD.

The western part of Galilee, i.e. Upper Galilee, however, was administered by Roman governors. Until the end of the Jewish Revolt, western Galilee together with Judea was administered by a Roman governor (*procurator*) of equestrian rank who was subordinate to the Roman legate of Syria. After the end of the war, western Galilee

¹³⁵ The Markan Christian community seems to have been a mixed community, including Jews and non-Jews. The clarifications of some Jewish customs seems to indicate that some members of the community were gentiles. Judging from Mk 13:9 (εἰς συνέδρια καὶ εἰς συναγωγὰς δαρήσεσθε), however, the Jewish leaders executed power over at least some of the Markan Christians. These Christians are, therefore, likely to have been Jews.

¹³⁶ See E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *History* I, p. 473, and note 8. There is some uncertainty as to the date when Tiberias and Tarichaeae were added to Agrippa II's territory. R.A. Horsley, *Galilee. History, Politics, People*, Valley Forge, 1995, p. 69, for instance, takes 54 AD as the year in which Nero extended Agrippa's realm. Vermes' arguments in favour of 61 AD seem to me more convincing.

became part of the new Roman province of Judea. This new province was administered by a Roman legate (*legatus*), who was also the general of the Tenth Legion.¹³⁷ In Greek the proper title of these legates is ἡγεμών.¹³⁸

In brief, when Mark wrote his Gospel, the eastern part of Galilee was administered by a king (βασιλεύς), the western part by the Roman legate (ἡγεμών) of Judea. Mark's designation of the civil authorities in Mk 13:9 as 'governors and kings' (ἡγεμόνες καὶ βασιλεῖς) corresponds perfectly with the actual administrative situation in Galilee. Mark's depiction of the Christians being tried by 'governors and kings,' then, fits a readership based in Galilee.¹³⁹

CONCLUSIONS

The observations discussed in this chapter warrant the following conclusions. The information given by early Christian authors about the date of Mark's Gospel and the place in which it originated is not reliable. The so-called 'traditional' view that the Gospel was written by a companion of the disciple Peter for the Christian community in Rome depends ultimately on some statements by Papias. These, however, can be shown to be apologetic in nature and tendency, and historically unreliable.

The evidence contained in the Gospel itself, on the other hand, turns out to offer some useful clues for determining the date and place of the author and his community. An analysis of Mk 12:9, 13:2, 13:14, and 15:38 leads to the conclusion that the Gospel was probably written after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 AD. The role of the three Galilean women in Mk 15 and 16, Mark's special interest in Galilee in Mk 14:28 and 16:7, and his correct and de-

¹³⁷ See E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *History* I, p. 514; R.A. Horsley, *Galilee*, p. 124.

¹³⁸ See, e.g., Josephus, *B.J.* VII 304; *Ant.* XII 121; XV 405; XIX 326; 340; *Vita* 373. The same title is used occasionally to designate a *praefectus* or a *procurator*, for which ἑπαρχος and ἐπίτροπος respectively are the more usual equivalents; see, e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII 24; XVIII 55; Mt 27:2; Acts 23:24, 26, 33; 24:1, 10; 26:30. See also H.J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions. A Lexicon and Analysis* (ASP 13), Toronto, 1974, pp. 142-151, esp. p. 147.

¹³⁹ I am aware that the phrase ἡγεμόνες καὶ βασιλεῖς occurs elsewhere to denote political authorities (see, e.g., Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* XVIII 55, 4; Plutarchus, *Moralia* 513d9). This does not alter the fact, however, that for a first-century, post-war, Galilean audience, as I believe the Markan community to be, this phrase fits the actual political situation.

tailed geographical references to places in Galilee all suggest that the Gospel is likely to have been written in Galilee.

CHAPTER THREE

JEWISH LEADERS INVOLVED IN THE PERSECUTION OF FELLOW-JEWS IN THE FIRST CENTURY AD

INTRODUCTION

Thus far it has been inferred that Mark probably wrote his Gospel after the fall of Jerusalem, that is, after 70 AD, for a Christian community living in Galilee. The intended readers of Mark's Gospel are believed to be persecuted by Jewish as well as non-Jewish authorities because of their adherence to the Christian movement. This hypothesis requires some further exploration.

Judging from Mk 13:9, the persecution of the Markan Christians has been occasioned by the fact that the interests of the Jewish leaders in Galilee ran parallel with those of the Roman authorities in the area.¹ This suggests that the reason for these persecutions was chiefly social or political, and not, or not exclusively, religious in nature. The objection the authorities had to the Christians, however, is never made explicit. The four 'persecution passages' in Mark's Gospel (Mk 4:17; 8:34-35; 10:29-30; 13:9-13) tell us only that the Christians are thought to be persecuted for their beliefs. Since Mark does not explain why the Jewish leaders and Roman governors in post-war Galilee should have persecuted the local Christian community, we must turn to contemporary literature in order to clarify the situation of the Markan Christians.

¹ See Chapter 1, esp. pp. 72-74. For the sake of convenience, I will speak about 'Romans,' 'Roman authorities,' 'Roman governors,' etc., when referring to the non-Jewish authorities. However, it must be remembered that, strictly speaking, this terminology suits the situation in western Galilee better than that in eastern Galilee, since, during the period under study, eastern Galilee belonged to the realm of king Agrippa II.

1. THE WORKS OF FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

The most important source of information on first-century Galilee is formed by the works of Flavius Josephus (37/38-*ca.* 100 AD).² In his *De bello judaico*, written during the late seventies of the first century AD,³ Josephus describes the history of the Jews in Palestine from the time of the Maccabean Revolt in the second century BC to the end of the Jewish Revolt against the Romans in the mid-seventies of the first century AD. This work includes a lengthy and detailed account of the events that took place in the period before, during, and after the Jewish Revolt in Palestine, that is, the sixties and early seventies of the first century AD. Josephus' *De bello judaico*, then, deals with the period and area in which the Markan community was living. Josephus does not mention the persecution of the Markan Christians, but a closer study of his report in *De bello judaico* may still shed light on the reasons for their persecution.

The analysis of Josephus' *Vita* and *Antiquitates judaicae*, both written during the nineties of the first century AD,⁴ may also contribute to our understanding of the situation of Mark's community. *Antiquitates judaicae* describes the history of the Jewish people from their origins to the beginning of the Jewish Revolt in 66 AD. Al-

² Other sources that could provide information about the situation in Galilee in the sixties and seventies of the first century AD are scarce. The Jewish philosopher Philo relates certain incidents that took place under the Roman prefect Pilate and the Emperor Gaius, but these events happened about thirty-five years before the period under study. The works of the Roman historians Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius all contain brief sections on the events in Palestine, but these accounts date from as late as the second century AD. Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that they are dependent on Josephus' reports; compare, e.g., Tacitus, *Historiae* V 13 with Josephus, *B.J.* VI 289-313; and Suetonius, *Vespasianus* V 6 with Josephus, *B.J.* III 401-402. Archaeological or numismatic evidence from first-century Galilee is also scarce.

³ The latest event recorded in *De bello judaico* is the erection of the Temple of Peace (*B.J.* VII 158), which was dedicated in 75 AD (see Dio Cassius, *Historiae romanae* LXV 15). *De bello judaico* was written during Vespasian's lifetime (see *Vita* 361; *Contra Apionem* I 51). Vespasian died in 79 AD. So Josephus must have written *De bello judaico* between 75 and 79 AD. See E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *et al.*, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* I, Edinburgh, 1973 (revised edition), pp. 47-48.

⁴ The work *Antiquitates judaicae* was published in 93/94 AD, as is clear from *Ant.* XX 267 where the present time is said to be the thirteenth year of the reign of Domitian (i.e. 93/94 AD); see E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *History* I, p. 48. The *Vita* was written after 92/93 AD. In *Vita* 336-367 Josephus refers to the work of Justus of Tiberias. According to *Vita* 359-360 Justus published his account of the revolt after the death of Agrippa II (i.e. 92/93 AD); see E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *History* I, pp. 481-483 and note 47.

though it does not relate the events of the revolt itself, it may deepen our insight into the socio-political situation of first-century Galilee. The *Vita* is Josephus' autobiography. It contains a lengthy description of his role in the revolt in Galilee, and thus provides information about the circumstances in that area in the period and situation under study.

In using evidence from Josephus, one must, however, proceed carefully, for his works are not a mere description of the historical facts. In writing his historical works, Josephus had certain intentions which influenced the way he presented the events. In his *De bello judaico*, for instance, he is trying to convince his readers that the Jewish Revolt should not be blamed on the Jewish people in general,⁵ nor the destruction of the Jerusalem temple on the Romans.⁶ According to Josephus the whole catastrophic episode is the fault of insurgent groups of fanatics and tactless Roman governors.⁷ In writing his *Vita* Josephus wishes to defend himself against Justus of Tiberias, who, in his account of the war, had accused Josephus of having encouraged the revolt in Galilee.⁸ The fact that the *Vita* is indisputably an apology and, besides, was written more than twenty years after the revolt, means that we should beware of overestimating its historical trustworthiness.

If read critically, however, Josephus' works, especially his *De bello judaico*, offer useful information about the situation in Galilee in the period under study. Since Josephus was a Jewish military leader during the revolt in Galilee, he was familiar with several of the events that took place there in the time of the revolt. Josephus could describe these on the basis of his own observations. Moreover, moving in Roman court circles after the submission of Palestine, he must have been in a position to obtain additional information from eyewitnesses or Roman imperial documents. Some of the information given

⁵ See, e.g., Josephus' description of the behaviour of the procurators Albinus (*B.J.* II 272-276) and Florus (*B.J.* II 277-332), and the reaction of the people.

⁶ See, e.g., *B.J.* I 10; VI 128; 241; 254-256. Cf. also, e.g., *B.J.* II 390-391; VI 310-315; *Ant.* XX 166, where the Roman victory over the Jews is represented as willed by God.

⁷ See, e.g., *B.J.* I 10; II 272-332. See also, e.g., M. Smith, 'The Troublemakers,' in W. Horbury, W.D. Davies, J. Sturdy (edd.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism* 3, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 501-568, esp. pp. 502-503.

⁸ See *Vita* 336-338.

by Josephus is confirmed by archaeological data, and certain geographical descriptions have proved to be surprisingly accurate.⁹ It is not unlikely that some of this information was borrowed from the imperial 'commentaries' or other sources available to Josephus.¹⁰

Furthermore, it should be noted that not all the information about the revolt contained in Josephus' works supports the authorial intentions of the book in which it is given. Much of it seems to be told just because it was part of the chain of events and, for that reason, could not be left out. This material, if analysed critically, may give us an even better insight into the social and historical situation of first-century Palestine.

On the other hand, it is true that certain recurrent themes and exaggerations discernible in Josephus' reports must be ascribed to Josephus' authorial bias or creativity. In *De bello judaico*, for instance, Josephus tends to present himself as an intelligent and courageous general, who was the leader of a great revolution.¹¹ Such information must be read with suspicion. Not all recurrent themes, however, indicate a Josephan distortion of the historical data. Some of them are likely to reflect the actual state of affairs in first-century Palestine.¹² This material can be used in a historical reconstruction.

Finally, one must realize that Josephus' freedom to distort the historical facts was not unlimited. If his accounts were easily proved false, his work would lose all credibility. Josephus presents himself as a historian, and is not likely to have sacrificed all historical reliability to his authorial intentions.

It may be concluded, therefore, that the information contained in Josephus' works, if used critically, can provide material for a recon-

⁹ See, e.g., M. Broshi, 'The Credibility of Josephus,' *JJS* 33 (1984), pp. 379-384; E.M. Meyers, 'Roman Sepphoris in Light of New Archeological Evidence and Recent Research,' in L.I. Levine (ed.), *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge Mass./London, 1992, pp. 321-338.

¹⁰ Josephus refers to the 'commentaries' or 'memoirs' of Vespasian and Titus in *Vita* 342 and 358, and in *Contra Apionem* I 56. See also, e.g., M. Smith, 'The Troublemakers,' p. 536.

¹¹ See, for example, Josephus' claim that he energetically fortified cities and trained his soldiers in *B.J.* II 572-584, and his repeated claim in *B.J.* III that, although he knew that he had no chance of victory long before he was defeated by the Romans, he did not forsake the Jewish cause. See also, e.g., S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome. His Vita and Development as a Historian*, Leiden, 1979, pp. 91-97.

¹² S.J.D. Cohen discerns six recurring motifs in the *De bello judaico* and ten in the *Vita* (see *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, pp. 240-242). Some of these motifs, however, were probably not invented by Josephus, but are at most an exaggeration of the actual situation.

struction of the historical situation of first-century Palestine. Carefully tested evidence from Josephus' works will also clarify why in post-war Galilee Jewish leaders and Roman authorities persecuted Christians.

2. THE POSITION OF THE JEWISH LEADING CLASS IN PALESTINE DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE FIRST CENTURY AD

As already said, the phrase 'you will be beaten in sanhedrins and synagogues, and will stand before governors and kings' in Mk 13:9 indicates that the persecutions of the Christians in Galilee are thought to be carried out by Jewish as well as Roman authorities. The involvement of the Roman authorities indicates that the Christians were persecuted chiefly for social or political reasons. At first sight, it seems remarkable that, according to Mark, the leading Jews participated in the political persecution of Christians. A large number of these Christians were certainly Jewish.¹³ The Jewish leaders, then, participated in the persecution of their own kinsmen. This observation becomes less astonishing, however, if one takes into account the position of the Jewish leading class in the Roman Palestine of the second half of the first century AD.

The Jewish leading class in Palestine during this period played a certain role in the Roman administration of the area. Several incidents related by Josephus show that, in fact, the Jewish elite stood between the Roman administrative authorities on the one hand and the Jewish people on the other. Josephus' works also contain evidence that the leading Jews, because of their position, negotiated with the Romans on behalf of their people. They tried to obtain justice from them and win their sympathy in, for instance, religiously delicate matters,¹⁴ and also gave voice to their people's complaints about the Roman administrators.¹⁵

At the same time, certain members of the Jewish leading class

¹³ See Chapter 2, p. 112, note 135.

¹⁴ See, e.g., *B.J.* II 287-288. Here Josephus asserts that the leading Jews of Caesarea offered money to the Roman procurator Florus, hoping to persuade him to decide in favour of the Jews in a conflict between the Jews and Greeks in the city concerning a synagogue.

¹⁵ See, e.g., *B.J.* II 333.

supported the Roman administration.¹⁶ This applies, for instance, to the domain of tax collecting, which was committed by the Romans to the Jewish elites in the towns. More importantly, groups of leading Jews repeatedly interfered in conflicts and problems involving Jews, and tried to keep certain Jewish political and religious movements under control. The activities of such movements as well as the conflicts could cause unrest and lead to violent disturbances. By trying to put a check on these conflicts and movements, the leading Jews assisted the Romans in the maintenance of the public order.¹⁷

One reason for their intervention was certainly that the leading Jews preferred peace and order to public violence. Another reason was the insight that a disturbance of the public order resulting from conflicts or popular movements among the Jews might lead to violent intervention by the Roman authorities. By assisting the Roman authorities in the maintenance of public order, the Jewish leaders may have hoped to avert such intervention.¹⁸ I will now discuss three incidents related by Josephus that illustrate this position of the Jewish leading class in Palestine.

The first incident that deserves mention is the conflict between Galilean Jews and Samaritans that took place under the Roman procurator Cumanus (48-ca. 52 AD) on the border between Samaria and the Great Plain.¹⁹ On their way from Galilee to Jerusalem a group of Galilean Jews are attacked by some Samaritan villagers. One of the Galileans is killed (*B.J.* II 232). The Galilean populace are furious. The notables among the Galileans go to Cumanus and ask him to punish the Samaritans, 'as that was the only means of dispersing the crowd before they came to blows' (*B.J.* II 233). Cumanus, however, does not react. A few Galileans, assisted by the brigand chiefs Eleazar, son of Deinaeus, and Alexander, take up arms and sack certain Samaritan villages (*B.J.* II 234-235). On hearing this, Cumanus

¹⁶ For a brief overview of the administration of the Roman Empire, see, e.g., P. Garnsey, R. Saller, *The Early Principate. Augustus to Trajan* (NSC 15), Oxford, 1982, esp. pp. 15-21.

¹⁷ See, e.g., R.A. Horsley, *Galilee. History, Politics, People*, Valley Forge, 1995, p. 73.

¹⁸ See also R.A. Horsley, *Galilee*, p. 73.

¹⁹ The incident is related by Josephus in *B.J.* II 232-246 and in *Ant.* XX 118-136. I will keep to the version in *De bello judaico*. Although the two accounts are somewhat different in detail, it makes no difference to our argument which version one follows, since the substance of the story in *Antiquitates* is the same as that in *De bello judaico*.

sends his troops against the Galileans. A great number of the Galilean brigands are caught or killed (*B.J.* II 236).

Next, the Jewish rulers of Jerusalem entreat the rest of the Galileans, who have set about making war on the Samaritans, 'not to bring down the wrath of the Romans on Jerusalem,'²⁰ and to abstain from further reprisals (*B.J.* II 237). Most of them obey, but some Galileans resort to robbery, and the area becomes a hotbed of insurrection (*B.J.* II 238). The leading Samaritans then go to the Roman governor of Syria, Ummidius Quadratus, and entreat him to punish these rebels. The leading men among the Jews, including the high-priest Jonathan, son of Ananus, also meet with Quadratus. They try to convince him of the fact that the disturbance started because of the murderous attack by the Samaritans, and the situation got out of control because Cumanus refused to take proceedings against the Samaritan attackers (*B.J.* II 239-240). Quadratus, finally, punishes the rebellious Jews, and sends the leaders of the Samaritans and those of the Jews to Claudius. Claudius settles the matter and sends Cumanus into exile (*B.J.* II 242-246).

This story clearly illustrates the position of the prominent citizens in Galilee and the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. After the attack by the Samaritans, the prominent Jews of Galilee go to Cumanus to urge him to speak on behalf of their people and hand in a request to punish the Samaritans who started the conflict. They do so, according to Josephus, to prevent the escalation of the conflict. Nevertheless, the conflict gets out of hand and the Romans intervene. Then, the Jerusalem authorities step in and try to calm down the insurgent Jews, in order to avert further violent action against the Jewish people on the part of the Romans. The Jewish leaders from Jerusalem also plead the Jewish case before the Roman governor Quadratus, and, later, before the Emperor Claudius. It should be noted that the leaders of the Samaritans are said to have done the same on behalf of their people.

It is of interest for our investigation to observe that in the events narrated by Josephus the leading Jews from Galilee as well as those from Jerusalem held a position between the Roman authorities and the Jewish population. The leading Jews tried to settle the conflict by addressing the Roman procurator on behalf of their people. By seek-

²⁰ This and all further quotations from Josephus' works are given in the translation of H.S.J. Thackeray.

ing justice from the Roman authorities, they hoped to prevent the escalation of the conflict. At the same time they tried to repress the rebellious movement among the Jews in order to avert violent intervention by the Romans.

Another incident in which leading Jews are said to have played a similar role took place in Jerusalem under the Roman procurator Florus (64-66 AD).²¹ Unfortunately, in Josephus' account of this incident in *De bello judaico*, the historical facts are likely to be distorted due to his intention to blame the outbreak of the Jewish Revolt on the misgovernment and malevolence of Florus.²² Some of what Josephus says about Florus' actions and motives in this story is thus probably devised by himself. He certainly embroiders his depiction of the behaviour of the Jewish leaders and that of the local people. His exaggerations are meant to place the responsibility for the escalation of the incident as much as possible on the shoulders of the Roman procurator.²³ But if due allowance is made for Josephus' authorial intentions, his story enables us to draw a reasonably reliable picture of the position of the Jewish leading class.

The incident can be sketched as follows. After Florus has taken money from the temple treasury, an insurgence arises in Jerusalem (*B.J.* II 293-294). Thereupon Florus gathers his troops and marches on the city (*B.J.* II 296). The 'chief priests, nobles, and most eminent citizens' try to persuade Florus to abstain from violent action against the people, arguing that the majority of them are 'peaceably disposed' (*B.J.* II 301-304). Florus, however, has the quarter of the Upper Market plundered, and a great number of people killed (*B.J.* II 305-308).

Subsequently, the chief priests and leading men in the city persuade the people to refrain from further calamities, and not to provoke the Roman procurator (*B.J.* II 316-317). They even exhort them to give the Roman cohorts that come to the city a courteous reception (*B.J.* II 320). The entrance of the Roman troops into Jerusalem, however, leads to a clash between the rebels and the Romans. The con-

²¹ This story is related by Josephus in *B.J.* II 293-332.

²² For Josephus' negative attitude towards the Roman procurators in Palestine, see, e.g., *B.J.* II 272-276 about Albinus, and *B.J.* II 277-283 about Florus.

²³ Cf. also above, p. 117 and note 7.

flict gets out of hand and the Romans violently restore order in the city (*B.J.* II 326-329).

Next, Florus decides to return to Caesarea. He sends for the chief priests and city council, telling them that he will leave whatever garrison they desire (*B.J.* II 331). They promise to maintain perfect order and prevent any revolution, but ask him to leave behind a different cohort from that which has just quelled the recent disturbances in the city. Florus grants them this request and leaves the city (*B.J.* II 332).

Although Josephus' report is highly dramatized, the role of the Jewish leaders is clear. It corresponds with the role of the eminent Jews in the story discussed above. According to Josephus, the Jerusalem authorities addressed Florus on behalf of the Jewish people and tried to persuade him to abstain from violent intervention. At the same time they tried to calm down the people who were intent on revolt, and to persuade them not to provoke the Romans. The fact that the Jewish leaders promised Florus to 'maintain perfect order and prevent any revolution' indicates that, according to Josephus, the leading Jews considered the maintenance of public order something they could be held responsible for.

The third incident to be discussed took also place in Jerusalem under Florus in 66 AD. In *B.J.* II 409-424 Josephus reports a strife between the chief priests and a group of leading citizens in Jerusalem on the one hand, and the party of Eleazar the temple captain on the other.²⁴ Eleazar and his men refuse to accept any gift or sacrifice from a foreigner, including the sacrifices offered on behalf of the Roman nation and emperor (*B.J.* II 409). The chief priests and notables try to persuade them to continue to allow the customary offering for the Roman government, but without success (*B.J.* II 410). Fearing the reprisals from the Romans, the principal citizens, together with the chief priests and the most eminent Pharisees, try to convince the people that sacrificing on behalf of the Roman government is in accordance with the Jewish religious traditions, and the refusal of the offerings is

²⁴ The 'captain of the Temple,' or the Sagan, was 'an official who in the hierarchy ranked next to the high priest.' See H.S.J. Thackeray in *Josephus. The Jewish War. Books I-II. With an English Translation* (LCL 203), Cambridge Mass./London, 1927 (reprint 1997), pp. 482-483, note c.

a provocation of the Roman authorities (*B.J.* II 411-416). Their pleading remains unsuccessful.

'Perceiving that it was now beyond their power to suppress the insurrection and that they would be the first victims of the vengeance of Rome,' the leading citizens, in order to establish their own innocence, send a deputation to Florus and another one to King Agrippa II, asking them to come up to the city with troops and 'crush the revolt before it became insuperable' (*B.J.* II 418-419). King Agrippa, then, provides them with a military force (*B.J.* II 421). After a confrontation of the king's soldiers with the rebels led by Eleazar, however, the latter group drives the pacifying party into fort Antonia and besieges it. The rebels win the fight, and the war has begun.

In this story members of the Jewish leading class play a role similar to that in the incidents discussed above. A group of temple officials provoke the Roman authorities by refusing the customary sacrifices for the emperor and the Roman nation, a subversive action that will certainly elicit Roman intervention. Certain Jewish leaders, who realize that such intervention would harm them, first try to restrain the insurgent movement by themselves. When it becomes clear that they will be unable to keep the rebellious group under control, they call upon the Roman procurator and the Roman client king Agrippa II for military support. The motivation for this behaviour of the leading Jews was, according to Josephus, their fear that they would be the first victims of Roman revenge if the situation escalated. Their calling upon the Roman authorities was an attempt to establish their own innocence. According to Josephus, the leading citizens of Jerusalem thought they might be held responsible for the public order in their city, and tried to avert Roman reprisals directed against them.

In all three incidents discussed above, the part played by the Jewish leaders is similar. In Roman Palestine as Josephus knew it, in Judea as well as in Galilee, Jewish leaders felt responsible for the maintenance of the public order among their people. A disturbance of the public order could provoke Roman intervention and, thus, harm the position of the leading Jews.²⁵ In order to avert such intervention,

²⁵ For the risk prominent Jews ran in case of revolutionary behaviour of lower-class Jews, see, for instance, Josephus' accounts, in *B.J.* II 229 and *Ant.* XX 114, of an incident which happened in ca. 50 AD. After revolutionaries robbed a slave of Emperor Claudius, Cumanus

certain Jewish leaders tried to restrain insurgent movements among the Jews. At the same time they acted as spokesmen of their people with the Romans in matters in which Jewish interests were likely to be injured and that might lead to insurrections. In short, leading Jews manoeuvred between the Roman authorities on the one hand and the Jewish people on the other, trying to satisfy both, to maintain the peace and to safeguard the well-being of themselves and their people.²⁶

3. THE PERSECUTION OF JEWISH REBELLIOUS OR RELIGIOUS GROUPS BY THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES

In the incidents discussed so far, the Jewish leaders tried to prevent the outbreak of insurrections among the Jews by means of persuasion and argument. Other events related by Josephus show, however, that they sometimes used methods that were more aggressive. In this section a few cases will be discussed in which the Jewish authorities actively persecuted Jewish groups or individuals whose behaviour was considered a violation of the public order.

The first incident to be discussed took place in Jerusalem during the year 62 AD. It is related by Josephus as one of the omens of the destruction of the temple.²⁷ The story runs as follows. During the Feast of Tabernacles, a peasant, called Jesus the son of Ananias, begins to cry out lamentations about Jerusalem and the temple (*B.J.* VI 300-301). Some of the leading citizens, annoyed by his ominous words, arrest and chastize him (*B.J.* VI 302). After his release, however, Jesus continues his lamenting. Therefore, the Jewish magistrates bring him before the Roman procurator of Judea, Albinus (*B.J.* VI 303). Albinus tortures and questions him, but when Jesus only reiterates his dirge over the city, Albinus concludes that Jesus is mad and sets him free (*B.J.* VI 304-305). Jesus resumes his lamenting, neither approaching nor talking to any of the citizens. Finally, he is

has the neighbouring villages plundered, and their most eminent men brought forward. According to *Antiquitates* Cumanus did so in order to 'exact vengeance for their effrontery.' According to *De bello judaico*, they were arrested for 'not having pursued and arrested the robbers.' Apparently, the leading Jews were held responsible for the fact that the robbers had had free play. Compare the incident related in *Ant.* XX 173-178, esp. 178.

²⁶ Cf. R.A. Horsley, *Galilee*, pp. 73-75.

²⁷ This story is related by Josephus in *B.J.* VI 300-309.

killed by a Roman projectile during the siege of Jerusalem (*B.J.* VI 308-309).

The role of the Jewish magistrates in this episode is clear. Annoyed by the disquieting cries of Jesus the son of Ananias, they arrest and torture him, and subsequently hand him over to the Roman authorities. What is not so clear in this story, however, is why the Jewish magistrates get so annoyed with him that they deliver him up to the Romans. But on the basis of material found elsewhere in Josephus' works their motives are easy to guess.

Josephus explicitly mentions that the incident took place during the Feast of Tabernacles (*B.J.* VI 300). From other passages in Josephus it is known that riots and disturbances often occurred during the religious festivals in Jerusalem. On those occasions the city was crowded with pilgrims, and the activities of riotous groups or individuals could easily lead to widespread disturbances. The so-called *sicarii*,²⁸ for instance, are said to have been active especially during the religious festivals in Jerusalem.²⁹ Moreover, the Romans are said to have taken special precautions during the feasts in order to prevent the outbreak of riots. In relating an incident that took place under Cumanus in *ca.* 50 AD, during Passover in Jerusalem, Josephus says that 'a body of men in arms invariably mounts guard at the feasts, to prevent disorders arising from such a concourse of people.'³⁰

Behaviour such as that of Jesus the son of Ananias could, then, easily have led to armed intervention by the Roman authorities. His crying doom over Jerusalem and the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles is likely to have caused unrest among the Jews. Such unrest would provoke the Romans, who, during the feast, guarded the city with special attention. This was certainly one reason why Jesus' behaviour annoyed the Jewish leaders. By delivering him to the Roman authorities the Jewish magistrates were trying to avert Roman intervention. The Romans, however, found the prophet's behaviour innocuous.

²⁸ *Sicarii* were revolutionaries armed with a dagger (*sica*).

²⁹ See *B.J.* II 255; *Ant.* XX 165; 187. Cf. *B.J.* II 42-44 and the accounts of ensuing disturbances; II 224-227; *Ant.* XX 208.

³⁰ See *B.J.* II 224. Cf. *B.J.* V 244; *Ant.* XX 106-107; 192.

In *B.J.* VII Josephus relates two other incidents in which leading Jews play a role comparable to that in the story about Jesus the son of Ananias. These incidents took place after the end of the war, in about 73 AD, outside Palestine.

The first incident took place in Alexandria.³¹ Shortly after the total subjection of Judea, some revolutionary Jews in Alexandria—according to Josephus, refugees from Judea—begin to give expression to their anti-Roman sentiments (*B.J.* VII 410). Certain Jews of rank, who oppose them, are killed by the revolutionaries, others persuaded to participate in the revolt (*B.J.* VII 411). The leaders of the Jewish council of elders, ‘thinking it no longer safe for them to overlook the proceedings’ of the revolutionaries, convene a general assembly of the Jews (*B.J.* VII 412). The elders explain to the people that the insurgents will ‘involve in the calamity which is their due’ also people who have nothing to do with their rebellious activities (*B.J.* VII 413). The Jewish leaders, then, advise the assembly ‘to beware of the ruin with which they are menaced by these men, and by delivering them up to make their peace with the Romans’ (*B.J.* VII 414). The Jews then start persecuting the rebels (*B.J.* VII 415-416). The Roman authorities, however, alarmed by the commotion among the Jews, intervene, which leads to the destruction of the Jewish temple in the Egyptian district of Onias (*B.J.* VII 420-421; 433-435).

What is of interest for our purpose is the fact that, according to this story, the leaders of the Alexandrian Jews who opposed the rebellious Jewish movement in their city advised the Jewish assembly to persecute the rebels. In their view, the activities of the rebels could provoke reprisals by the Romans that would harm people who had nothing to do with their revolutionary activities. By persecuting the rebels and handing them over to the Roman authorities, they hoped to prove their loyalty to the Romans and to avert reprisals that would be directed against the whole Jewish community in the city.

The second incident took place in Cyrene.³² After the end of the revolt in Palestine, someone called Jonathan, a weaver by profession, causes an insurrection in Cyrene. Josephus reports that Jonathan, after he has taken refuge to that city, induces a great number of people to follow him into the desert, ‘promising them a display of signs

³¹ This incident is related in *B.J.* VII 409-436.

³² This incident is related by Josephus in *B.J.* VII 437-450; cf. also *Vita* 424-425.

and apparitions' (*B.J.* VII 438). The 'men of rank among the Jews' report this exodus to the Roman governor of the Libyan Pentapolis, Catullus (*B.J.* VII 439). Jonathan and his followers are overpowered by the Romans. Most of them are killed, but some, including Jonathan, are arrested alive (*B.J.* VII 440). Jonathan is brought before Catullus, and declares to him that he received his instructions from the wealthiest of the Jews (*B.J.* VII 442). Catullus then has a large group of well-to-do Jews murdered and their possessions confiscated (*B.J.* VII 443-446). Moreover, he sends Jonathan to Vespasian with accusations against even more eminent Jews. Vespasian, however, stops the persecutions and punishes Jonathan (*B.J.* VII 450).

In this incident the same motivation appears to have underlain the conduct of the leading Jews as in the case of Jesus the son of Ananias. The behaviour of Jonathan the Weaver caused unrest in the city. The eminent Jews of the city reported this to the Roman authorities, and in doing so betrayed their insurgent fellow-Jews to them. Their motives are not mentioned, but they undoubtedly did so in their own interest. Unfortunately for them, after his arrest by the Romans, Jonathan accused certain eminent Jews of instigating the insurrection. This led to the persecution of the members of the leading class of the Jews in Cyrene.

In these two events, which took place in Alexandria and Cyrene shortly after the end of the Jewish Revolt in Palestine, Jews in prominent positions acted in the same way as the Jewish magistrates in Jerusalem are said to have done in the case of Jesus the son of Ananias in the year 62 AD. Hoping to avert Roman reprisals against the Jews, these Jewish leaders persecuted Jews whose activities seemed a threat to public order and might irritate the Romans. Roman reprisals would certainly not only harm the Jewish rebels, but also people who had nothing to do with their rebellious activities. By reporting these activities to the Roman authorities or by persecuting the insurgents and handing them over to the Roman procurator in the area, the Jewish leaders tried to prove their loyalty to the Romans and avert reprisals that would be directed against the whole Jewish community in the area.

It must be noted that such persecutions affected different groups of people. The above examples concerned Jewish groups that were quite distinct in nature. From Josephus' accounts about the Roman occu-

pation of Palestine it is clear that the Roman authorities in Palestine did not tolerate any kind of disorder. They took the same action against non-violent groups as against violent groups.

The Roman procurators, for instance, took armed action against the groups of robbers and brigands that plagued the country during the fifties and sixties of the first century AD. The activities of these groups menaced the stability of the government and undermined the economic and social welfare of the area.³³ The Roman authorities persecuted the members of these robber bands and put large numbers of them to death.³⁴

However, not only insurgent groups were seen as a threat. Religious groups, too, could disturb the public order and were therefore sometimes persecuted by the Romans.³⁵ Many of these groups were led by a charismatic leader, who mobilized a great number of followers by announcing divine intervention or the occurrence of miracles. In several cases their followers gathered in a remote place in order to await the events to come. A case in point is the movement of Theudas in and near Jerusalem in about 45 AD. An account of the events occurs in Josephus' *Antiquitates* XX 97-98. Claiming to be a prophet, Theudas persuaded a large group of people to take up their possessions and follow him to the river Jordan. The Roman procurator Fadus, however, sent a squadron of cavalry and had Theudas' followers captured or killed.

In his *Antiquitates* Josephus mentions several other religious groups that perished by the hand of Roman troops sent after them.³⁶ Apparently the Romans considered the behaviour of such groups a violation of public order. The Roman authorities tried to repress such religious movements, just as they persecuted brigand and rebellious groups. Neither the fact that such a movement was inspired by religious ideals rather than political ambitions, nor the fact that it was not militant or armed, seems to have made any difference to the Romans. They reacted to non-militant, religious movements in the same way

³³ See, e.g., *B.J.* II 264-265; *Ant.* XX 5; 160; cf. *B.J.* II 254; 274-276.

³⁴ See, e.g., *B.J.* II 253; 271; *Ant.* XX 160-161.

³⁵ An overview of the different types of such religious movements in Palestine in the first century AD can be found in R.A. Horsley, J.S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs. Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus*, Minneapolis, 1985.

³⁶ See, e.g., *B.J.* II 258-260; 261-263; VI 285-287; *Ant.* XVIII 85-87; 117-119; XX 167-168; 169-172; 188.

as to violent, revolutionary movements. Therefore, hoping to avert Roman reprisals against the Jews, Jewish leaders persecuted religious as well as rebellious groups.

This is illustrated well by the case of Jesus the son of Ananias. Although Jesus' behaviour may have caused unrest in the city, he cannot be said to have had political or rebellious intentions. He was rather a prophetic figure, whose behaviour was seen as a threat to the stability of the government, and who was, therefore, persecuted as a rebel. The same may have been true in the case of Jonathan the Weaver. Although Josephus hints that there was a connection between Jonathan and the Judaeen movement of the *sicarii*, nothing in the story suggests that his followers were armed, or were planning a political revolt. They may have been no more than a group of religious fanatics following their prophet.

For now it suffices to conclude that in first-century Palestine as Josephus describes it certain Jews of rank, who might be held responsible for the peace and quiet among their people, sometimes persecuted Jewish individuals or groups whose behaviour they thought might entail public disturbances.³⁷ They reported the activities of these individuals or groups to the Romans, or apprehended them and delivered them up to the Roman authorities.³⁸ It is clear from Josephus' description of the conflict between the Jews and Samaritans under Cumanus (*ca.* 50 AD), discussed above,³⁹ that in this respect the position of the leading Jews in Galilee was similar to that of their Judaeen colleagues. Like the leading Jews in Jerusalem, the prominent Jews of Galilee tried to restrain socially subversive movements among the Galilean Jews which might provoke Roman reprisals.

³⁷ Compare also Jn 11:47-48 and Lk 23:5, where the high priests accuse Jesus before Pilate of stirring up the people.

³⁸ Apart from the examples discussed, see also *B.J.* II 273; here Josephus says that Albinus accepted ransoms on behalf of people who 'had been imprisoned for robbery by the local councils or by former procurators' (*ca.* 62 AD). Apparently also the local councils, which consisted of the local leading citizens, persecuted and imprisoned revolutionaries (λησται). And see *B.J.* II 301-304, where Florus is said to have asked the leading citizens of Jerusalem to hand over the rebels (*ca.* 66 AD).

³⁹ See *B.J.* II 232-246; *Ant.* XX 118-136. This incident is discussed above, pp. 120-122.

4. THE PERSECUTION OF THE MARKAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN POST-WAR GALILEE

In modern scholarship first-century Galilee has often been considered a seat of revolutionary movements and strong anti-Roman sentiments. It has been described as the centre of the resistance against the Roman occupation. The view has been put forward that the majority of the Galileans supported the rebellious party and participated in the Jewish Revolt with enthusiasm.⁴⁰ This view, however, has rightly been rejected by several scholars.⁴¹ The idea that Galilee was mainly anti-Roman seems, indeed, to be incompatible with the evidence about the revolt in Galilee gained from a careful reading of Josephus' works.

There is no evidence of a general anti-Roman disposition among the people in Galilee during the first century AD. Until the Jewish Revolt, no incidents are recorded which attest to a general anti-Roman mentality in Galilee.⁴² The Jewish Revolt itself, which in Galilee took place in 66-67 AD, does not seem to have been a widely supported, unanimous resistance arising from general hostility towards the Romans, either. In the *De bello judaico* as well as in the *Vita*,

⁴⁰ See, e.g., M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten. Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I. bis 70 n. Chr.*, Leiden/Köln, 1976², esp. pp. 57-61 and 77; E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule. From Pompey to Diocletian. A Study in Political Relations* (SJLA 20), Leiden, 1976, p. 302.

⁴¹ E.g., D.M. Rhoads, *Israel in Revolution 6-74 C.E. A Political History Based on the Writings of Josephus*, Philadelphia, 1976, p. 175 note 1; S. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 BCE to 135 CE. A Study of Second Temple Judaism*, Edinburgh, 1980, pp. 208-247; U. Rappaport, 'How anti-Roman was the Galilee?', in L.I. Levine, *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge Mass./London, 1992, pp. 95-102; S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, pp. 183-184 and 201-203; R.A. Horsley, *Galilee*, pp. 258-259; idem, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee. The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis*, Valley Forge, 1996, pp. 37-39; M. Smith, 'The Troublemakers,' pp. 536-537.

⁴² The so-called 'Zealot movement' is generally thought to have originated in Galilee, but all the activities of the 'Zealot' groups took place in Judea, not in Galilee; see, e.g., U. Rappaport, 'How anti-Roman was the Galilee?', p. 98; R.A. Horsley, *Galilee*, pp. 64 and 259; M. Smith, 'The Troublemakers,' pp. 507 and 542. The only violent incident related by Josephus that took place prior to the outbreak of the Jewish Revolt in Galilee proper was a conflict between Jews and Samaritans (ca. 50 AD; see *B.J.* II 232-246; *Ant.* XX 118-136). This incident, however, does not seem to have arisen from anti-Roman sentiments, but from tensions between the two ethnic groups. The protest that arose in Tiberias under Petronius (ca. 40 AD; see *B.J.* II 192-198; *Ant.* XVIII 270-272) has the appearance more of a peaceful strike than a violent revolt. See also U. Rappaport, 'How anti-Roman was the Galilee?', pp. 97-98.

Josephus mentions several rebellious groups that were active in Galilee during the revolt of 66-67 AD. He mentions, for instance, the revolutionaries led by John of Gischala, and a revolutionary group in Tiberias of which Jesus son of Saphat was the leader.⁴³ These rebellious groups, however, seem to have operated separately and within a limited area. Their resistance against Rome does not seem to have been unified, and their motives for participating in the revolt may have differed.⁴⁴

Furthermore, Josephus' accounts of the revolt reveal that during the revolt in Galilee certain groups remained loyal to the Romans and voluntarily submitted to them, and resisted the insurgent parties in the area, sometimes even most energetically.

Sepphoris, for instance, is described by Josephus as mainly pro-Roman.⁴⁵ Josephus' picture of the city's loyalty may be somewhat exaggerated, but his assertion that the city voluntarily submitted to the Romans is confirmed by numismatic evidence. Some Sepphorite coins minted in 67/68 AD show the remarkable inscription 'In the time of Vespasian—City of Peace—Neronias—Sepphoris.'⁴⁶ The fact that the city was granted the titles 'City of Peace' and 'Neronias,'

⁴³ John of Gischala in, e.g., *B.J.* II 585-632; Jesus son of Saphat in *B.J.* III 450, and in *Vita* 66 and 134, where he is called the son of Saphias. Compare also the local gang of youths from a village called Dabaritha in *B.J.* II 595, and in *Vita* 126-127. In Judea too the revolt seems to have been instigated by several groups of rebels each with their own interests, and sometimes fighting among themselves; see, e.g., *B.J.* IV 406-409; 503-520; 558-584; VII 262-270.

⁴⁴ See R.A. Horsley, *Galilee*, pp. 87-88; idem, *Archaeology*, p. 37; D.M. Rhoads, *Israel*, esp. pp. 94-149; U. Rappaport, 'How anti-Roman was the Galilee?', p. 101; cf. M. Smith, 'The Troublemakers,' pp. 564-565.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., *B.J.* II 511; III 31-32; 59; *Vita* 347; 373; 394. In the initial stage of the war, Sepphoris seems to have sided with the rebels (*B.J.* II 574; 629-630; III 61). Several scholars, however, think that this is merely a Josephan invention (e.g., U. Rappaport, 'How anti-Roman was the Galilee?' p. 100; and S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, p. 247; according to these scholars the Sepphorites fortified their city not against the Romans but against the rebels), or that the Sepphorites supported the rebels only to protect themselves (e.g., R.A. Horsley, *Galilee*, pp. 77-78 and 165; idem, *Archaeology*, p. 37).

⁴⁶ See Y. Meshorer, 'Jewish Symbols on Roman Coins Struck in Eretz Israel,' *Israel Museum News* 14 (1978), pp. 61-63. In Greek the inscription reads: ΕΠΙ ΟΥΕΣΠΙΑΣΙΑΝΟΥ ΕΙΡΗ-ΝΟΠΟΛΙ ΝΕΡΩΝΙΑ ΣΕΠΦΩΡ. See also S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, Appendix I, pp. 245-248; E.M. Meyers, 'Roman Sepphoris,' p. 324; idem, 'Sepphoris on the Eve of the Great Revolt (67-68 C.E.). Archaeology and Josephus,' in E.M. Meyers (ed.), *Galilee through the Centuries. Confluence of Cultures* (DJSS 1), Wiona Lake, 1999, pp. 109-122, esp. pp. 116-118.

that is, 'City of Nero,' confirms that the city was indeed, as in Josephus' account, taken by the Romans without resistance.

In Tiberias, too, there seems to have been a strong pro-Roman peace party.⁴⁷ In *Vita* 32-42 Josephus asserts that there were three parties in Tiberias, one of which consisted of respectable citizens who opposed the war. In the *De bello judaico* as well as in the *Vita*, Josephus describes how the Tiberians asked the pro-Roman king Agrippa II, who ruled the eastern part of Galilee and to whose territory Tiberias belonged, for military support to protect their town against the troops led by Josephus.⁴⁸ Also the fact that, according to Josephus, Tiberias voluntarily submitted to the Romans by accepting a treaty indicates that there must have been a strong peace party consisting of citizens who preferred to continue their allegiance to the Romans and the client king Agrippa II.⁴⁹

The inhabitants of Gischala and Tarichaeae too seem, to a certain extent, to have been in favour of peace with Rome. Josephus asserts that the majority of the inhabitants of Tarichaeae were opposed to the revolt. 'Intent on their property and their city, they had from the first disapproved of the war.'⁵⁰ The inhabitants of Gischala were, according to Josephus, 'inclined to peace, being mainly agricultural labourers whose whole attention was devoted to the prospects of the crops.'⁵¹

Whatever the attitude of these towns may have been precisely, Josephus' picture of these peace-minded Galileans seems plausible. The peace party in Gischala and that in Tarichaeae are represented by Josephus as consisting of people who owned property that might be damaged in warfare. This picture is perfectly plausible. People who were dependent for their sustenance on property that could suffer damage or be lost in a war may generally have been opposed to a revolution against Rome.⁵²

⁴⁷ Josephus' assertion in *Vita* 349-354 that during the war Tiberias was entirely anti-Roman is probably inspired by his polemical attitude towards Justus of Tiberias (cf. *Vita* 336-338).

⁴⁸ See *B.J.* II 632; *Vita* 155; 381; cf. *Vita* 384; 391.

⁴⁹ See *B.J.* III 443-461.

⁵⁰ See *B.J.* III 492-493.

⁵¹ See *B.J.* IV 84.

⁵² See also S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, pp. 183-185: 'No doubt that many of the wealthy wanted nothing more than the preservation of the status quo ...' (p. 184). Although the political situation in Judea was probably different from that in Galilee, in Judea, too, a proportion of the privileged class seem to have remained loyal to the Romans and disap-

In other words, the population of Galilee was not as rebellious as some scholars have suggested. There was no unified anti-Roman resistance in Galilee. The revolt was carried out mainly by rebellious groups that operated separately.⁵³ A large group of Galileans, among whom certain members of the Jewish leading class, were opposed to a revolt against the Romans. This group remained loyal to the Roman emperor and the Roman client king Agrippa II, even during the revolt of 66-67 AD. These Galileans preferred safety and order to war, even if that meant subordination to the Romans.

It must be pointed out that certain leading citizens in Galilee not only remained loyal to the Romans, but also succeeded in retaining the intermediary position between Romans and Jews that they had occupied in the period prior to the revolt. This is clear from Josephus' account of the submission of Tiberias in *B.J.* III 448-457.

Josephus relates that Vespasian sends the decurion Valerianus to the town to agree terms with the inhabitants of Tiberias. The Roman delegation, however, is attacked by a group of rebels (*B.J.* III 450-452). Fearing the consequences of this event, the elders and the more respected of the citizens go—with the support of king Agrippa II—to the Roman camp and entreat Vespasian to spare the city and punish the authors of the revolt (*B.J.* III 453-455). 'The delegates thus secure terms on behalf of their fellow citizens,' and the rebels flee from Tiberias to Tarichaeae (*B.J.* III 457).

In these events the leading Tiberians played the same role as the Jewish leaders had done before the war. A number of them, who were in favour of treaty with Rome, feared the consequences of the rebellious attack on Valerianus. They went to the Roman camp to speak on behalf of their people and thus avert Roman reprisals that would not only destroy the rebels, but also harm the peaceful citizens of Tiberias.

proved of the revolt. In *B.J.* II 556, for instance, Josephus says that after the defeat of the Romans near Jerusalem at the beginning of the war 'many distinguished Jews abandoned the city as swimmers desert a sinking ship.' These eminent Jews, apparently, did not favour the revolt (cf. also, e.g., *B.J.* II 533; 648-651; IV 158-161; 327-328; VI 113-115). The same can be said about the leading citizens of Gadara in Peraea. In *B.J.* IV 414-425 Josephus relates that they requested Vespasian to take over their city.

⁵³ See also R.A. Horsley, *Galilee*, pp. 76-88; cf. M. Smith, 'The Troublemakers,' esp. pp. 564-565.

Also during the revolt, then, the Jewish leaders, according to Josephus, continued to act as mediators between Romans and Jews. They pleaded with the Romans on behalf of their people, and tried to dissociate both themselves and the peace-minded citizens from the rebellious groups. By so doing they hoped to avert Roman reprisals and save their properties and position.

What happened after the end of the revolt in Galilee is uncertain. Josephus says nothing about the situation in Galilee in the period after the Roman subjection of the Jews. It is, however, reasonable to assume that the tendencies discussed above continued to exist. The propertied Galileans are likely to have maintained their pro-Roman attitude after the Romans restored order in the area. And the pro-Roman Jewish leaders are likely to have continued to play their intermediary role between Romans and Jews, albeit on the stricter conditions of the Roman authorities.⁵⁴

Once they had restored order in Palestine, the Romans introduced a stricter administration of the area. Since the death of Agrippa I in 44 AD, Palestine, with the exception of the areas that were granted to Agrippa II, had been administered by Roman procurators who were subordinate to the Roman legate of Syria. These procurators had command only over auxiliaries. If a serious incident arose they depended on the support of the legions stationed in Syria.⁵⁵ After the subjection of Jerusalem, however, Palestine was turned into a new, separate Roman province, named Judea. This province was ruled by a Roman legate who was simultaneously the commander of a Roman legion stationed in Judea.⁵⁶ The Jewish authorities, who before the revolt had handled a large proportion of the country's internal affairs, now lost some of their former authority. The grasp of the Romans on the affairs in Palestine became firmer.

The leading Jews in Galilee who had remained loyal to the Romans during the revolt are, however, likely to have continued to play

⁵⁴ See also R.A. Horsley, *Galilee*, pp. 90-91.

⁵⁵ Accordingly, the Jewish authorities in Judea complained about the Roman procurator of the area, Florus, with the legate of Syria, Cestius Gallus; see *B.J.* II 280-283.

⁵⁶ According to *B.J.* VII 17, the tenth legion stayed in Jerusalem after the subjection of the city. See E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *History* I, p. 514; Z. Safrai, 'The Roman Army in the Galilee,' in L.I. Levine, *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge Mass./London, 1992, pp. 103-114, esp. p. 104.

a certain part in the administration of their area. They probably assisted the Romans in the administration of the province as they had before the revolt, albeit under stricter supervision. This assumption seems to be confirmed by the picture Mk 13:9 gives of the relationship between Jews, Romans, and Christians in Galilee. As has already been argued, in this verse Mark has Jesus foretell that the Christians who live in Galilee after the end of the revolt will be persecuted by Jewish as well as Roman authorities. Apparently the loyalty of the leading Jews to the Roman authorities continued after the revolt as it had before.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion seems to be warranted that the involvement of Jewish leaders in the persecution of the Markan Christians is not an isolated incident. It corresponds with what is known to us about the role of the leading Jews in Palestine, and about similar persecutions several years earlier, before the outbreak of the revolt.

Especially the way Jewish leaders, according to Josephus, dealt with Jesus the son of Ananias in Jerusalem in 62 AD is very much analogous to the way leading Jews in Mk 13:9 are said, some ten years later, to have treated the Markan Christians. Jesus the son of Ananias was first arrested and flogged by the leading citizens of Jerusalem, and then handed over to the Roman procurator. The Markan Christians are said to be 'handed over, beaten in sanhedrins and synagogues, and brought before governors and kings' (Mk 13:9). It is not unlikely that, like Jesus the son of Ananias some years earlier, the Christians were arrested and flogged by the Jewish leaders and subsequently handed over to the Roman authorities, i.e. in the western part of Galilee to the Roman legate,⁵⁷ in the eastern part to king Agrippa II.

The persecution of the Markan Christians by the Jewish and Roman authorities in Galilee after the war, then, seems to have been of the same nature as the persecution of people like Jesus the son of Ananias before the war. The Josephan material discussed in this

⁵⁷ The Greek word ἡγεμών, which Mark uses in Mk 13:9, is a standard term for Roman provincial governors: *procurator*, *praefectus*, *legatus*, or *proconsul*. See also p. 113 note 138.

chapter shows that Jewish authorities assisted the Romans in persecuting Jewish individuals or groups whose behaviour was considered a threat to public order. Jewish leaders were inclined to oppress such persons and groups in order to prevent the Romans from taking violent action against the Jewish community as a whole. It remains to be seen whether this was also the motive underlying the Jewish repression of Markan Christians in Galilee.

EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS

THE SITUATION OF THE MARKAN CHRISTIANS

In the preceding chapters it was argued that the community for which Mark wrote his Gospel was situated in Galilee, that he wrote it some time after the end of the Jewish revolt in that region, and that he considered the Markan Christians to be oppressed by the Jewish as well as the Roman authorities in the area. A comparison with Josephan material has made it plausible that these Christians were persecuted by Jewish authorities and occasionally handed over to the Romans. It has also become clear that such persecutions were normal practice in first-century Palestine whenever the behaviour of groups or individuals was considered a threat to public order. The latter observation leaves us with the question of whether the Markan Christians were also persecuted because their behaviour or ideas laid them open to the charge of subversion.

With regard to this question, it is important to note, first of all, that the Markan Christians are likely to have formed a community independent of the Jewish synagogue, since a number of Jewish religious rules were no longer observed by them. This is evident from the disputes Mark's Jesus has with Jewish representatives about Jewish rules on purity, fasting, and Sabbath rest in Mk 2:13-3:6 and 7:1-23. The fact that in these passages Mark seems to justify the Christian neglect of these Jewish religious regulations is an indication that within his community these regulations were no longer practised, or at least no longer strictly. Therefore, it seems right to assume that the Markan Christian community was independent of the Jewish synagogue and had its own rules, meetings, initiation rite, and community meal.¹ In the eyes of leading Jews the Christian community must, therefore, have looked like a socially deviant group breaking away from Judaism.

¹ Mark's use of *πρότιον* in Mk 10:38-39 and 14:36 is evidence that the Markan community was acquainted with the custom of a periodical community meal, the Lord's supper. Mk 10:38-39 may indicate that they practised baptism as an initiation rite.

In leading Jewish circles, however, the Christians must have been viewed not only as a group which had seceded from Judaism; they must also have appeared to belong to that minority of the population that was inclined to social insurrection. The impression that the Christian community was a subversive movement could easily have arisen, given that the teaching of the Christians was understood to include certain elements that seemed to characterize them as the followers of an anti-Roman rebel. The Christians professed, after all, to be the followers of Jesus called the Christ, who around 30 AD had preached the imminence of God's kingdom. He had been arrested and crucified, but, according to his followers, had been raised from the dead and vindicated by God, and would come again to gather his adherents at the final breakthrough of God's kingdom. The Christian profession that Jesus was the Christ, as well as the fact that he had been crucified, might lead the Jewish leaders to expect the Romans to consider the Christian community a subversive movement.

The profession of the Christians that Jesus was the Christ could be taken as an indication of their subversiveness because of the connotations the title 'Christ' ('anointed one') had in contemporary Judaism. In the Jewish Scriptures and Jewish literature of the first centuries BC and AD, the phrase 'his [i.e., God's] anointed one' is used mainly to designate royal persons. In the Jewish Scriptures, Saul and David, for instance, as future Israelite kings are called 'anointed of God,' that is, designated by God to become king over Israel.² When in Judaism the expectation arose that a future king sent by God would restore the sovereignty of the Jewish people and reign over a free and independent Israel, the title 'Christ' could be applied to this future king. In Jewish literature from the Roman period this future king might be referred to as God's Christ.³ In other words, in Hellenistic Judaism the title 'Christ' had political connotations, implying Jewish nationalist ideas and aspirations towards an independent

² For Saul, see, e.g., 1 Sam 12:3, 5; 24:7, 11; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2 Sam 1:14, 16. For David, see, e.g., 1 Sam 16:6; 19:21(22); 22:51; 23:1; Ps 17:50 (18:51); 19:6 (20:7); 27:8 (28:8). The word 'anointed' is used also, but less often, of a priest; see, e.g., Lev 4:5, 16; 6:22(15); 2 Macc 1:10. Only in very rare cases is anointment mentioned in connection with a prophet; see, e.g., Isa 61:1.

³ See, e.g., Ps Sal 17:32; 4 Ezra 7:28, 29; 12:32; 2 Baruch 29:3; 30:1; 39:7; 40:1; 70:1. For a discussion of these passages in relation to relevant texts from Qumran, see M.A. Knibb, 'Messianism in the Pseudepigrapha in the Light of the Scrolls,' *DSD* 2 (1995), pp. 165-184.

Jewish state. As a result, the fact that Jesus' followers called him the Christ might lead outsiders to believe that Jesus had been a royal pretender, claiming to be a king sent by God and set on seizing authority over Palestine. The Christians could, thus, easily be considered the followers of a rebel who had political aspirations and disputed the authority of the establishment. The profession that Jesus was the Christ could, therefore, lead the Jewish leaders to regard the Christians as a rebellious Jewish movement, or at least to fear the Romans might regard them as such.

The fact that Jesus was crucified might also incriminate his followers as rebels. Crucifixion was a punishment considered to be one of the severest in Roman jurisdiction and applied primarily to non-Roman inhabitants of the Roman Empire who were tried for serious offences such as banditry or social insubordination.⁴ Besides, historically speaking it is not unlikely that Jesus was indeed executed for provoking social unrest.⁵ His execution is comparable with that of other first-century charismatics, who were executed by the Romans because of the popular movements they inspired and the social unrest their behaviour provoked. Josephus mentions several such figures who were put to death by the Roman authorities for similar reasons.⁶ In the eyes of the Roman authorities, then, the Christians were the followers of someone who had suffered severe punishment for subversive behaviour, and thus might be expected to display such behaviour themselves. In brief, the historical fact of Jesus' crucifixion

⁴ For the crucifixion of rebels or robbers see, e.g., Josephus, *B.J.* II 75 (parallel in *Ant.* XVII 295); 241 (parallel in *Ant.* XX 129); 253; III 321; V 289; 449-451. See also, e.g., Petronius, *Satirae* 111, 5, and Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* III 9, who mention crucifixion as a punishment for *latrones*. See also Livy, *Ab urbe condita* XXX 43, 13 and Valerius Maximus, *Memorabilia* II 7, 12 who mention crucifixion as a punishment for deserters. Cicero, *In Verrem* II 5, 165 calls crucifixion 'supplicium crudelissimum taeterrimumque;' cf. Josephus, *B.J.* VII 203. See H.F. Hitzig, art. 'Crux,' in G. Wissowa (ed.), *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* IV, Stuttgart, 1901, cols. 1728-1731, esp. col. 1728; M. Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (transl. by J. Bowden), London/Philadelphia, 1977.

⁵ See, e.g., C. Burchard, 'Jesus of Nazareth,' in J. Becker (ed.), *Christian Beginnings. Word and Community from Jesus to Post-Apostolic Times* (transl. by A.S. Kidder, R. Krauss), Louisville, 1993, pp. 15-72, esp. pp. 66-67. Cf. G. Theissen, A. Merz, *The Historical Jesus. A Comprehensive Guide*, Minneapolis, 1998, pp. 465-467.

⁶ For the first half of the first century, see, e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII 118 (John the Baptist); *Ant.* XVIII 85-87 (a Samaritan, under Pilate); *Ant.* XX 97-98 (Theudas, under Fadus). See also *B.J.* II 258-260; 261-263 (parallel in *Ant.* XX 169-171; under Felix).

might also lead the Jewish leaders to expect the Romans to consider the Christian community a subversive Jewish movement.⁷

To summarize, it can be said that the ideas of the Christian community might indeed lead outsiders to consider it a rebellious movement, opposing Roman domination over Palestine. Especially in the period after the Jewish revolt, when the Romans tightened control over Palestine and maintained strict public order in the area, such a suspicion of subversiveness might provoke serious reprisals on the part of the Romans. This in itself would—as we have already seen—be reason enough for the leading Jews to persecute the troublemakers and deliver them up to the Roman authorities. Whether fear of Roman intervention was indeed the reason why the Jewish leaders in post-war Galilee persecuted the Markan Christians will be examined in the second part of this study.

⁷ Cf. S.G.F. Brandon, 'The Apologetical Factor in the Markan Gospel,' in F.L. Cross (ed.), *Studia Evangelica* II, Berlin, 1964, pp. 34-46, esp. p. 35; idem, *Jesus and the Zealots. A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity*, Manchester, 1967, pp. 243 and 245-246.

PART TWO

THE MESSAGE OF MARK'S GOSPEL

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ISSUES OF JESUS' AUTHORITY AND IDENTITY IN MARK'S GOSPEL

INTRODUCTION

My aim in the following chapters is to show that Mark's Gospel contains evidence in support of the hypothesis that the reason for the persecution of the Markan Christians is believed by Mark to be the fact that they could be seen by the authorities as a threat to public order. The main evidence is the observation that Mark deals with both the political connotations of the title Christ and Jesus' crucifixion in a way that reveals that he is trying to defend the Christian community against the suspicion of subversiveness.

In order to show that the evangelist indeed intends to defend his fellow-Christians against such suspicion, I will discuss several aspects of Mark's representation of Jesus. The present chapter will attempt to make it clear that the evangelist tries to legitimize the Christians' faithful adherence to Jesus' preaching by depicting Jesus' whole ministry as authorized by God. Furthermore, it will be argued that Mark intends to show that Jesus was not a royal pretender claiming political power over Israel, but God's final envoy who will definitively inaugurate God's kingdom on his return from heaven.

1. THE ISSUE OF JESUS' AUTHORITY IN MARK'S GOSPEL

In the first half of Mark's Gospel, Mk 1:1-8:26, one of the major themes is Jesus' authorization by God. The evangelist clearly wants to stress that from the very beginning of his ministry Jesus was authorized by God. Already in the opening section of the Gospel, Mk 1:1-15, the evangelist intends to show his readers that Jesus' ministry was part of God's eschatological plan. According to Mk 1:1-15, Jesus' coming was heralded by John the Baptist, whose own appear-

ance in its turn had been announced by the prophets of Israel, and the basis for Jesus' ministry was a heavenly calling.

In Mk 1:2-3 Mark introduces John the Baptist by presenting his appearance and activity in accordance with a compilation of quotations from the Jewish Scriptures.¹ Mark's message here is that John's ministry was announced by Israel's prophets. In Mk 1:6 Mark further depicts John as the prophet Elijah by saying that 'John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey.'² According to Mal 4:5-6, God had promised to send Elijah 'before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes,' in order to 'turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.'³ By presenting John the Baptist as Elijah, Mark expresses the idea that John has been sent to prepare the breakthrough of God's kingdom.⁴ In short, Mark's depiction of John the Baptist in Mk 1:2-3 and 6 is meant to prove that John's ministry was announced by the prophets of old. Thus, John's ministry is presented as part of God's eschatological plan.

John's ministry, according to Mark, comprehends proclaiming 'a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins' (Mk 1:4) as well as announcing the coming of 'someone who is more powerful' than John himself (Mk 1:7-8). In Mk 1:9-11 it becomes clear to the reader that the one heralded by John is Jesus. Now Mark presents John's ministry as part of God's eschatological plan. By implication, Mark also presents the ministry of Jesus as part of the divine plan, and Jesus himself as sent by God.

¹ The quotation from 'Isaiah the prophet' in Mk 1:2-3 is in fact a compilation of quotations taken from several books of the Jewish Scriptures. This accounts for the alternative reading τοῖς προφήταις in Mk 1:2 in some manuscripts. The first part of the quotation, ἰδοὺ ... τὴν ὁδόν (v. 2), is a compilation of Ex 23:20 and Mal 3:1; the second part, φωνή ... τὰς τρίβους (v. 3), is taken from Isa 40:3. The compilation in v. 2 is probably pre-Markan, since it is also found in Q 7:27.

² See 2 Kings 1:8, where Elijah is depicted as 'a hairy man with a leather belt around his waist.' In Mark's Gospel the idea that John the Baptist is Elijah (i.e. plays the role assigned to Elijah in Mal 4:5-6) is also found in Mk 9:11-13.

³ Cf. also Sir 48:10.

⁴ Note that in Mal 4:5-6 Elijah is said to be the one who, as a preacher of penitence, prepares people for the Day of the Lord. According to Mark, this role of Elijah's is played by John the Baptist. In the latter's message, however, the Day of the Lord, that is, the day on which God will appear to pass judgement, becomes the day of the appearance of Jesus Christ as the one who inaugurates God's reign.

According to Mk 1:9, Jesus 'came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.' At his baptism Jesus had a vision, seeing 'the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him,' and hearing a voice from heaven saying 'You are my Son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased' (Mk 1:10-11). In Mark's view, then, Jesus is not only the one who was announced by John the Baptist, but is also appointed Son of God by God himself.

After his baptism (Mk 1:9-11), Mark's Jesus is 'driven out into the wilderness' (Mk 1:12). For forty days Jesus is said to be tempted by Satan, to live among wild animals, and to be served by angels (Mk 1:13). In Mk 1:12-13 the evangelist depicts Jesus as a man of God who, sustained by angels, is able to bear the desolation and danger of the wilderness, and resist Satan's temptation. Mark does not tell his readers explicitly that Jesus resists Satan, but he certainly expects his readers to understand that Jesus remained absolutely faithful to God. The story in Mk 1:12-13 is meant to indicate that by the time Jesus set out to fulfil his heavenly mission he had already proven himself the right person to act as God's special envoy.

In sum, the opening story of the Gospel (Mk 1:1-11) introduces Jesus as the one who was exclusively authorized by God. His coming is part of God's plan for Israel. He is God's beloved Son. The quotations in Mk 1:2-3, John's prophecy in Mk 1:7-8, and especially Jesus' vision in Mk 1:10-11 are all meant to show the readers that Jesus is God's special envoy. When Jesus starts 'proclaiming the good news of God' in Mk 1:14-15, he has—according to the evangelist—God's mandate to do so.⁵

In fact, the whole first half of Mark's Gospel (Mk 1:1-8:26) seems to be concerned mainly with the issue of Jesus' authorization by God. Mk 1:1-8:26 is characterized predominantly by Jesus' miraculous deeds. The evangelist extensively recounts certain healings and exorcisms as well as other miracles,⁶ often emphasizing the extraordinary nature of Jesus' performance. Jesus appears to be able to cure the

⁵ Compare also the discussion on Mk 1:1-15 in, e.g., J.D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel*, Philadelphia, 1983, pp. 55-71, esp. pp. 64-65; M. de Jonge, *Christology in Context. The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus*, Philadelphia, 1988, pp. 53-57, esp. p. 56.

⁶ For healings, see Mk 1:29-31, 40-44; 2:1-12; 3:1-6; 5:21-43; 7:31-37; 8:22-26; for exorcisms, see Mk 1:21-28; 5:1-20; 7:24-30; for other miracles, see Mk 4:35-41; 6:35-44, 45-52; 8:1-9.

most serious and chronic diseases,⁷ also those that others have not been able to cure.⁸ Even death has to give way to him.⁹ His miraculous power is so strong that merely touching his robe is enough to procure healing.¹⁰ Jesus has the power not only to heal people and cast out demons, but also to suppress the violence of a storm.¹¹ The evangelist relates these stories about Jesus' supernatural deeds in order to represent Jesus as the authorized agent of God. This is exemplified by the story of the healing of the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12).

In Mk 2:1-12 the evangelist relates that while Jesus stays at Capernaum some people come, bringing to Jesus a paralysed man (v. 3). When they cannot reach Jesus 'because of the crowd, they remove the roof' of the house Jesus is staying in and 'let down the mat on which the paralytic is lying' (v. 4). Jesus 'seeing their faith says to the paralytic "Son, your sins are forgiven"' (v. 5). But the scribes present take exception to this and object 'Who can forgive sins but God alone?' (v. 6). Obviously they question Jesus' authority, denying his special relation with God. In reaction, Jesus asks 'Which is easier, to say to the paralytic "Your sins are forgiven," or to say "Stand up and take your mat and walk"' (v. 9). So Jesus equates the forgiving of sins with healing. In order to demonstrate that he is entitled to forgive sins, as he claims he is, Jesus cures the paralytic (vv. 10-12). It may be inferred that the story of the miraculous healing of the paralytic is meant to show that Jesus acts as an authorized representative of God, who is allowed and able to do things that normally only God can do.¹²

The same can be said about the story of Jesus stilling the storm in Mk 4:35-41. While Jesus and his disciples are crossing the lake from Capernaum to the other side, suddenly a storm arises, filling their

⁷ See Mk 1:23-26, 29-31, 32-34, 40-44; 2:1-12; 3:1-6, 10-11; 5:1-20, 21-43; 7:24-30, 31-37; 8:22-26.

⁸ See Mk 5:26.

⁹ See Mk 5:21-24, 35-43.

¹⁰ See Mk 3:10; 5:27-29; 6:56.

¹¹ See Mk 4:35-41.

¹² See also M. de Jonge, *Christology in Context*, p. 65; D. Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (HNT 3), Tübingen, 1987, p. 58; R.H. Gundry, *Mark. A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, Grand Rapids, 1993, pp. 112-113; R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (HTKNT 2) I, Freiburg/Basel/Wien, 1976, p. 161; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (WBC 34a), Dallas, 1989, p. 96; M.D. Hooker, *A Commentary to the Gospel according to St. Mark* (BNTC), London, 1991, p. 83.

boat full of water (v. 37). But, Mark says, Jesus 'rebuked the wind and said to the sea "Peace! Be still!,"' and 'the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm' (v. 39). The story presents Jesus as being capable of controlling the sea and the wind, and thus as acting by virtue of divine power. For, in biblical tradition, ruling the wind and the sea is God's prerogative.¹³ The Psalms, for instance, repeatedly mention God's power to still storms and the waves of the sea. A case in point is Ps 107, which elaborates extensively on God's power to control the forces of nature (Ps 107:23-32).¹⁴ Accordingly, Mark's story of Jesus stilling the storm also demonstrates that Jesus acts as the authorized agent of God.¹⁵ The evangelist underlines this in Mk 4:41 by having the disciples wonder who Jesus is 'that even the wind and the sea obey him.'

The story of Jesus walking on water in Mk 6:45-52 has the same function. In this story the evangelist relates that while the disciples are in a boat in the middle of the lake Jesus comes to them 'walking on the sea' (περιπατῶν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης, v. 48). In Jewish tradition 'walking on the sea' is something only God does. In Job 9:8, for instance, God is said to be the one 'who alone stretched out the heavens and walked on the sea as on the ground' (περιπατῶν ὡς ἐπ' ἐδάφους ἐπὶ θαλάσσης, Job 9:8LXX).¹⁶ Consequently, by depicting Jesus walking on water Mark presents him as doing something only God can do, and thus as God's specific representative on earth.

The story of the raising of Jairus' daughter in Mk 5:21-43, too, seems to aim at representing Jesus as acting on the authority of God. Mark's story is reminiscent of stories about Elijah, in 1 Kings 17:17-

¹³ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* I, pp. 272-273; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (EKK 2) I, Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1978, p. 196; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 97; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. 267; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27), New York/London, 2000, pp. 333-334.

¹⁴ See also Ps 65:7; 89:9; 93:4. Cf. Ps 106:8-9; Isa 51:9-10. Compare also 4Q521, fragment 2, II 1, where it is said that '[the heav]ens and the earth will listen to his anointed one.'

¹⁵ See also D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 97; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 241; M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, pp. 138 and 140.

¹⁶ See also Job 38:16; Ps 77:19 (76:20); Sir 24:5. Some scholars have noted that the motif of walking on water in Mark's story has parallels also in Graeco-Roman literature (e.g., A. Yarbro Collins, 'Rulers, Divine Men, and Walking on the Water (Mark 6:45-52),' in L. Bormann, *et al.* (edd.), *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World* (FS D. Georgi) (Supplements to NT 74), Leiden, 1994, pp. 207-227, esp. pp. 211-223). However, as far as I am aware, Job 9:8LXX offers the closest verbal parallel to Mk 6:48. See also R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. 351; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 269.

24, and Elisha, in 2 Kings 4:17-37. True, the plots of these stories differ from that of Mark's story about Jairus' daughter. Yet it is worth noting that 1 Kings 17:24 views raising someone from the death as a deed which reveals that the doer is a 'man of God.' Mark's Jesus, then, performs the kind of miracles that are characteristic of a man of God.

It deserves to be noted that the evangelist also explicitly rejects an incorrect interpretation of Jesus' supernatural power.¹⁷ In Mk 3:20-30 it is said that Jesus' relatives, on hearing that he is followed everywhere by a crowd longing for miraculous healings,¹⁸ 'went out to restrain him' saying 'he has gone out of his mind' (v. 21).¹⁹ Not only his relatives, but also 'the scribes who came down from Jerusalem' believe that Jesus' ability to heal and cast out demons is the result of his being possessed by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons (v. 22). In vv. 23-27 the evangelist has Jesus explain why this cannot be true: Satan cannot cast out Satan, for if Satan were to stand up against himself, he would destroy himself, which he certainly would not want to do (vv. 24-26). In order to cast out Satan, one needs to fight and defeat him (v. 27). Therefore, Jesus casting out demons is not a sign of him being possessed by Satan, but rather of his struggle against, and authority over, Satan.

In sum, it can be said that the stories about Jesus' exorcisms, healings, and miracles in Mk 1:1-8:26 serve to demonstrate that he acted as someone authorized by God.²⁰ God's authorization of Jesus' ministry legitimizes his preaching, and, more importantly, the faith his followers put in him in the past as well as in the present, that is, in Mark's days.

¹⁷ Cf. M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, p. 114.

¹⁸ Cf. Mk 1:28, 32-33, 37, 45; 2:2, 13; 3:7-8, 9-10.

¹⁹ Some scholars have taken ἔλεγον in Mk 3:21 to mean 'the people were saying' (see, e.g., NRSV). It is, however, more natural to take οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ in the same verse as the subject of ἔλεγον, not a general 'the people,' or 'they,' or 'one.' Moreover, if those who say Jesus has gone out of his mind are taken to be οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ, Mk 3:31-35 becomes more understandable. In that case, vv. 31-35 represent Jesus as rejecting those who do not recognize his authority—in this story, his own family—and accepting those who follow him. See also V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark. The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes*, London, 1966², pp. 236-237.

²⁰ Cf. R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, pp. 5-7.

2. THE ISSUE OF JESUS' IDENTITY IN MARK'S GOSPEL

a. *The Question of Jesus' Identity in Mk 1:1-8:30*

Another major theme in the first half of Mark's Gospel is that of Jesus' identity.²¹ Throughout Mk 1:1-8:26 the evangelist draws the reader's attention to this theme by emphasizing the extraordinary character of Jesus' deeds. The astonishment of the people about Jesus' healings and other miracles,²² his fame spreading rapidly all over Palestine, the enthusiasm of the crowd which grows continuously and follows him everywhere,²³ the lack of insight of the disciples,²⁴ and the recurrent question of who Jesus is²⁵—all these are elements that focus the attention of the reader on Jesus' exceptional powers, and thus on the issue of his identity.²⁶

The characters in the first half of Mark's Gospel do not really know who Jesus is, since none of them witnessed the vision at Jesus' baptism in which his identity as the Son of God was revealed (Mk 1:11). Only the demons, who belong to the supernatural realm, seem to recognize him.²⁷ Right from the beginning the demons recognize Jesus as 'the holy one of God' or 'the Son of God,'²⁸ and know that he will destroy them.²⁹ Apparently the demons, as beings belonging to the supernatural sphere, possess supernatural knowledge. As a result, they know without being told that Jesus is God's eschatological agent. Jesus 'sternly ordered them,' however, 'not to make him known' (Mk 3:12).³⁰ Despite the fact that the demons reveal Jesus' identity, other characters in the Gospel remain unacquainted with it.

²¹ Compare the discussion of Mk 1:14-8:26 in J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, pp. 71-89.

²² For reactions of astonishment, both positive and negative, see, e.g., Mk 1:22, 27; 4:41; 5:15, 20, 42; 6:2, 51; 7:37.

²³ See, e.g., Mk 1:28, 32-34, 45; 2:2; 3:7-9; 4:1-2; 6:33; cf. Mk 6:14.

²⁴ See Mk 4:35-41; 6:45-52; 8:14-21.

²⁵ See, e.g., Mk 4:35-41; 6:14-16; 8:27-29; cf. Mk 1:27; 2:7.

²⁶ See also J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, pp. 80-86.

²⁷ J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, p. 86 rightly remarks that 'the demons' knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God plainly coincides with God's "evaluative point of view" regarding Jesus' identity expressed at the baptism (1:11).' Kingsbury also refers to Mk 1:34, where the demons are said to know Jesus.

²⁸ See Mk 1:24; 3:11; 5:7. Cf. also Mk 1:34.

²⁹ See Mk 1:24; 5:7.

³⁰ See also Mk 1:25 and 34.

No one else in the Gospel seems to know exactly who Jesus is, not even the Twelve who are chosen by him to be his disciples.

This is illustrated, for instance, by the story of the stilling of the storm in Mk 4:35-41. After Jesus stills the storm on the Galilean Sea (v. 39), his disciples are said to be ‘filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”’ (v. 41). If they had recognized Jesus as God’s special envoy—or in Markan terms, if they had had faith (cf. οὐπω ἔχετε πίστιν; v. 40)—, they would not have feared the storm, for they would have known they would not perish. But they have not yet recognized him, and continue not to recognize him. Consequently, they are scared, and amazed about Jesus’ authority over the wind (v. 41).

The disciples’ lack of insight is mentioned again in the story about Jesus walking on the water in Mk 6. Mark relates that after the feeding of the five thousand (Mk 6:30-44) the disciples board a boat and set course for Bethsaida (v. 45). Then, seeing that his disciples ‘were straining the oars at an adverse wind,’ Jesus, who has stayed behind on land, comes towards them, walking on the sea (v. 48). Seeing him walking on the water the disciples are terrified, thinking he is a ghost (v. 50). When they recognize Jesus, they are said to be ‘utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened’ (v. 52). What the evangelist intends to say in v. 52 is that, despite the fact that the disciples have witnessed the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (Mk 6:35-44), they still have not come to see the truth about Jesus, namely that he is God’s unique envoy. Therefore, the fact that he can walk on water still astonishes them.

In Mk 8:14-21 the evangelist again picks up the issue of the disciples not knowing who Jesus is. While sailing from Dalmanutha to Bethsaida, Jesus warns the Twelve against the Pharisees and Herod (v. 15).³¹ They do not listen, however, because they are more concerned about the fact that they have not brought any bread (vv. 14 and 16). Jesus, overhearing their discussion, rebukes them for worrying, saying: ‘Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you

³¹ The alternative reading Ἡρωδιανῶν in some of the manuscripts must be considered a scribal variant influenced by Mk 3:6 and 12:13; see B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament. A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (fourth revised edition)*, Stuttgart, 1994², p. 83.

still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?' (v. 17). What the Twelve should have understood by now is that they need not worry about food because Jesus as God's special envoy is capable of providing them with everything in abundance, as the miraculous feedings of the five thousand and the four thousand, recorded in Mk 6:30-44 and 8:1-10 respectively, have shown (vv. 19-20). But from the miracles they have witnessed the disciples have not yet drawn the right conclusion with regard to Jesus' identity.

In the first half of Mark's Gospel, then, no one in Jesus' environment seems to know who he really is, except Jesus himself and the demons he exorcizes. His healings and miracles, however, which reveal that he is especially authorized by God appear to be a clue to his identity. In Mk 8:29 Peter finally gains a correct understanding of Jesus' exceptional qualities.³² Jesus' miraculous acts prove that he is the Christ.³³

It is noteworthy that Peter's confession is in fact a climax, concluding the question of Jesus' identity that has dominated the whole of Mk 1:1-8:26.³⁴ It is also important to note that now for the first time in the Gospel the title Christ is applied to Jesus as a designation

³² There are at least three compelling reasons why the evangelist must have considered Peter's profession that Jesus is the Christ in Mk 8:29 to be fitting. First, Peter's confession itself is the antithesis of the clearly inappropriate views of the people about Jesus mentioned in Mk 8:28. Secondly, the command to silence that follows Peter's confession (Mk 8:30) attests to its correctness (see below, Chapter 5, p. 177). Thirdly, the fact that Mark uses 'Christ' twice as a proper name (namely, in his own comment in Mk 1:1, and in Jesus' words in Mk 9:41), indicates that the evangelist considers the title 'Christ' in itself an apt designation of Jesus' identity. See J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, pp. 92-94; H. Räisänen, *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark's Gospel* (transl. C.M. Tuckett), Edinburgh, 1990, pp. 179-180; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, pp. 428 and 445; R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 33; J. Gnllka *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 15; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 145; M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, pp. 201-203; U. Luz, 'The Secrecy Motif and the Marcan Christology,' in C.M. Tuckett (ed.), *The Messianic Secret* (IRT 1), Philadelphia/London, 1983, pp. 75-96, esp. p. 83; D.H. Juel, *Messiah and Temple. The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (SBL DS 31), Missoula, 1977, pp. 89-90; cf. M. de Jonge, *Christology in Context*, pp. 57-58; idem, 'The Earliest Christian Use of Christos. Some Suggestions,' in H.J. de Jonge (ed.), *Jewish Eschatology, Early Christian Christology, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Collected Essays of Marinus de Jonge* (Supplements to NT 63), Leiden, 1991, pp. 102-124, esp. pp. 106-107; against T.J. Weeden, *Mark. Traditions in Conflict*, Philadelphia, 1971, pp. 64-65; W.H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark. A New Place and a New Time*, Philadelphia, 1974, pp. 82-83.

³³ The alternative reading ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in some of the manuscripts must be considered a scribal variant influenced by the Matthean parallel in Mt 16:16.

³⁴ See also J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, p. 81.

of his identity.³⁵ The evangelist uses the title Christ in this way only three times, namely in Mk 8:29, 14:61, and 15:32.³⁶ In all three passages its occurrence will prove to be, in one way or another, essential. In fact, it will become apparent that in all three cases the evangelist uses the title Christ as a designation of Jesus' identity with the objective of rejecting the interpretation of Jesus as a political figure and royal pretender.

b. Mark's Interpretation of Jesus as the Christ in Mk 8:31-10:45

After Peter's profession that Jesus is the Christ in Mk 8:29, the focus of Mark's story seems to change completely. Healings and miracles, which figure so prominently in Mk 1:1-8:26, hardly occur at all in the second half of the Gospel.³⁷ More than before, the evangelist seems to be concerned with the implications and consequences of being a Christian, and with ethical questions as to how Christians should behave and relate to each other.³⁸ The most remarkable change, however, is the sudden increase in the evangelist's interest in the issue of Jesus' death and resurrection.

In Mk 1:1-8:26 hardly a word is said about Jesus' imminent death.³⁹ After Peter's confession in Mk 8:29, however, it becomes

³⁵ The word *χριστός* already occurs in Mk 1:1, and in different versions of a longer reading of Mk 1:34 preserved in part of the scribal tradition. However, in Mk 1:1 *χριστός* is used as a proper name for Jesus, not a designation of his identity. In Mk 1:34 the shorter reading (without *χριστός*) is more likely to be the original reading; the longer readings can be explained as the result of influence from Lk 4:41; see B.M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*², p. 64.

³⁶ In Mark's Gospel the word *χριστός* occurs seven times. The other four instances can be passed by here without discussion, since none of them is related to the theme of Jesus' true identity. In Mk 13:21 *χριστός* does not refer specifically to Jesus, but is used in a generic sense meaning 'royal pretender.' In Mk 12:35 the title 'Christ' occurs in the discussion of whether the Christ is a descendant of David or not; it refers to Jesus only in an indirect way. In Mk 1:1 and 9:41, *Χριστός* is used as a proper name for Jesus, not in order to describe his identity.

³⁷ After Mk 8:31 only two healings are related, in Mk 9:14-27 and 10:46-52. The only miracle story narrated after Mk 8:31 is that of the cursing of the fig tree in Mk 11:12-14 and 19-21.

³⁸ See, e.g., Mk 9:33-37; 10:2-12, 13-16, 17-31, 35-45; cf. Mk 9:28-29, 38-50.

³⁹ The only verse in Mk 1:1-8:30 that alludes to Jesus' death is Mk 3:6, where the evangelist says that the Galilean Pharisees start planning to bring about Jesus' death. Contrary to appearances, Mk 2:19-20 does not allude to Jesus' death. It is a warning against fasting: Christians should not fast, since Christ is with them. Only if Christ ever forsakes them will they be allowed to fast, the supposition being that this will never happen. See W. Schenk, 'Die rhetorische Funktion der Fastenwarnung Mk 2,20,' in W.L. Petersen, J.S. Vos, H.J. de Jonge (edd.), *Sayings of Jesus. Canonical and Non-canonical* (FS T. Baarda) (Supplements to NT 89), Leiden, 1997, pp. 251-276.

one of the most important themes. In Mk 8:31-10:45 the evangelist has Jesus speak repeatedly about his coming death and resurrection.⁴⁰ The final part of the Gospel, Mk 14:1-16:8, relates extensively how his predictions are fulfilled. What I wish to argue here is that the reason for the evangelist dealing so intensively with the issue of Jesus' death and resurrection in Mk 8:31-10:45 is that he wants to preclude a false understanding of Jesus' identity that might be provoked by Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ (Mk 8:29). That this is the evangelist's aim is clear above all from his account of the conversation between Jesus and his disciples in Mk 8:31-9:1.

In reaction to Peter's confession (Mk 8:29), Jesus sternly orders his disciples 'not to tell anyone about him' (Mk 8:30). Then he tells them frankly that he will be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes (that is, the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin), will be killed, and will rise again after three days (Mk 8:31).⁴¹ Peter takes him aside, however, and begins to rebuke him (Mk 8:32). Obviously Peter is annoyed with Jesus speaking about his coming death. The reason for his annoyance is not mentioned explicitly, but can be grasped from the immediate context. Peter's reaction is best understood if one takes into account the fact that Jesus' prediction of his death in a way contradicts the conclusion Peter has just reached that Jesus is the Christ (Mk 8:29).

As was pointed out above, in Judaism of the Roman era the title

⁴⁰ See Mk 8:31-33; 9:9-13, 30-32; 10:32-34. There is an almost general consensus that these passages are due to Mark's redaction of the Gospel.

⁴¹ The fact that in Mk 8:31 Jesus uses the title 'Son of Man' instead of taking up Peter's 'Christ' (Mk 8:29), does not mean that Mark considers the title 'Son of Man' to be more apt to describe Jesus' identity than the title 'Christ.' (This seems to be suggested by, e.g., D.E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark* (PGC A 489), Harmondsworth, 1963, pp. 225 and 227; N.R. Petersen, *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics*, Philadelphia, 1978, pp. 63 and 68; T.J. Weeden, *Mark*, p. 67.) As has been argued in note 32 above, the title 'Christ' itself is adequate as a designation of Jesus' identity. Mark's text contains no indication whatsoever that the title 'Christ,' when used for Jesus, is incorrect; only the way Peter understands it is revealed to be inappropriate (Mk 8:32). Moreover, the opposition in Mk 8:27-33 is between the interpretation of Jesus as a prophet and as Christ, not between his interpretation as Christ and as Son of Man. Finally, in Mark's Gospel the title 'Son of Man' is used exclusively by Jesus to refer to himself; it cannot therefore serve as an alternative answer to the question of his identity. See J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, pp. 95-97; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 447; cf. M. de Jonge, 'The Earliest Christian Use of Christos,' p. 107; D.H. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, pp. 90-91; H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 180.

Christ had political connotations.⁴² It was mostly applied to a future, God-given king who was expected to restore the sovereignty of the Jewish people and reign over a free and independent Israel.⁴³ Consequently, if Peter was right in identifying Jesus as the Christ (Mk 8:29), Jesus must not die before assuming his responsibilities as deliverer of Israel. The reason why Peter objects to Jesus' prediction of his death is that it dashes Peter's hope that Jesus, the Christ, will restore Israel's glory.

Jesus rejects Peter's criticism, however, and rebukes him, saying that Peter is 'not setting his mind on divine things, but on human things.' In other words, Peter's idea about what the Christ should be like conforms only to human expectations, not to God's plan. God's Christ will not fulfil these human expectations, but is about to fulfil God's plan, which includes Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. Mark has Jesus add that not only he, but also his followers will suffer (Mk 8:34). Those who are not prepared to accept suffering because of Jesus and the gospel will not be saved by him when he returns at the breakthrough of God's kingdom (Mk 8:38).⁴⁴

In sum, in Mk 8:31-9:1 Mark has Jesus object to the political interpretation of the title Christ when applied to him. Jesus, the Christ, will not assume power over Palestine as Peter expects him to do. The evangelist thus rejects the idea of the Christ as a royal pretender meeting Jewish nationalist hopes. Instead, Mark states that the Christ,

⁴² See Part One, Evaluation of the Results, pp. 140-141.

⁴³ That Mark is aware of the political connotations of the title 'Christ' is evident from Mk 14:61 and Mk 15:2. In Mk 14:61 the evangelist has the high priest ask Jesus whether he claims to be the Christ, the Son of God. After Jesus' affirmative reply, he is accused of blasphemy, and brought before the Roman prefect Pilate. In Mk 15:2 Mark has Pilate ask Jesus whether he claims to be 'king of the Jews.' Apparently Mark is aware that the political designation 'King of the Jews' is a possible interpretation of the titles 'Christ' and 'Son of God.' See also Mk 15:32.

⁴⁴ In the opinion of the evangelist, Jesus' task will not be accomplished until after his death and resurrection. After his assumption and rehabilitation by God, Jesus will return at the definitive breakthrough of God's kingdom, in order to gather his followers and take care of those who remained faithful to him. Jesus' parousia is referred to in Mk 8:38, immediately after the first prediction of Jesus' death in Mk 8:31. It is dealt with more extensively, however, in Mk 13. In the eschatological discourse in Mk 13:5-37, the evangelist has Jesus foretell how the final breakthrough of God's kingdom will take place and what will be the signs of its coming. After the period of heavy affliction in which the Markan community is living one will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory' (Mk 13:26). Jesus will then 'send out angels and gather his elect from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven' (Mk 13:27).

who will inaugurate God's kingdom, must die and rise again, and will return at its definitive breakthrough to take care of his followers (Mk 8:31 and 38).⁴⁵

Mk 8:31-9:1 is immediately followed by the story of the transfiguration of Jesus in Mk 9:2-13. In v. 2 the evangelist has Jesus take three of his disciples up a mountain. There Jesus 'was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them' (vv. 2-3). Subsequently, 'there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus' (v. 4). This story of Jesus' metamorphosis and his encounter with Moses and Elijah expresses the idea that already in his terrestrial ministry Jesus belongs to the heavenly realm. The disciples, who are terrified and do not know what to say, are overshadowed by a cloud and hear a voice from the cloud saying 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' (v. 7). Then, suddenly they see no one else but Jesus (v. 8).

For the second time in the Gospel, Mark has God reveal Jesus as his Son. The first time, in Mk 1:11, only Jesus could hear the heavenly voice. Now, in Mk 9:7, there are three disciples witnessing God's revelation. To the disciples, Jesus' transfiguration and the heavenly voice in Mk 9:2-7 confirm that Peter's confession in Mk 8:29 is correct. The event proves beyond doubt that Jesus is God's special envoy.

The readers of the Gospel have been acquainted with Jesus' divine Sonship ever since the opening story in Mk 1:1-15. At first sight, then, the story of the transfiguration of Jesus does not seem to reveal anything new to them. What makes it relevant to Mark's readers, however, is not its content but its place in the Gospel. The revelation

⁴⁵ For a similar interpretation of Mk 8:31-9:1, and especially for Mark's interpretation of the title 'Christ' in this section, see, e.g., N.R. Petersen, *Literary Criticism*, pp. 67-68; M. de Jonge, *Christology in Context*, p. 58; idem, 'The Use of Ho Christos in the Passion Narratives,' in H.J. de Jonge (ed.), *Jewish Eschatology, Early Christian Christology, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Collected Essays of Marinus de Jonge* (Supplements to NT 63), Leiden, 1991, pp. 63-86, esp. pp. 73-74; J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, pp. 94-98; D.H. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, pp. 115-116; D.E. Nineham, *St. Mark*, pp. 224-225; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, pp. 428, 445, and 447. Cf. N. Perrin, 'The Christology of Mark,' in M. Sabbe (ed.), *L' évangile selon Marc. Tradition et rédaction* (BETL 34), Leuven, 1988², pp. 471-485, esp. pp. 475-478; idem, *What is Redaction Criticism?*, London, 1974, pp. 53-56; Perrin follows T.J. Weeden in arguing that in Mk 8:31-33 the evangelist is concerned with correcting a 'divine man' christology; for arguments against such a view, see Introduction, p. 10.

recorded in Mk 9:2-8 follows the passage in which the evangelist has Jesus challenge the political interpretation of the title Christ, whenever this title is assigned to him (Mk 8:31-33). The heavenly voice in Mk 9:7 does not correct what Jesus asserts about his identity in Mk 8:31-33; rather it underscores and authorizes it. God's revelation in Mk 9:2-8 not only reaffirms the fact that Jesus is God's special envoy, the Christ; it also confirms that Jesus as the Christ is not a royal pretender, but someone who must suffer, die, and rise again, as Mark has Jesus say in Mk 8:31.⁴⁶

The first prediction of Jesus' Passion in Mk 8:31 is followed by a second one in Mk 9:30-31, and a third in Mk 10:32-34. The three predictions of Jesus' death (Mk 8:31; 9:30-31; 10:32-34) alternate with passages dealing mainly with ethical issues, or exhorting or comforting Christians in view of temptation or persecution.⁴⁷ However, through the repetition of the prediction of Jesus' death in Mk 9:30-31 and 10:32-34, the evangelist continues to imbue his readers with the idea that Jesus, although he was the Christ, had no political ambitions, but accepted humiliation and suffering.

In the latter passage, Mk 10:32-34, Jesus' prediction of what will happen to him is remarkably detailed. It agrees perfectly with the course of events in Mk 14-16.⁴⁸ On the one hand, the fact that the events narrated in Mk 14-16 correspond precisely with Jesus' predictions recorded in Mk 8-10 is meant to show that these predictions were valid. On the other hand, the fact that Jesus knew in advance everything that would happen in Mk 14-16 indicates that these events are all included in God's plan. Jesus' death was, according to Mark, not the fatal outcome of the failure of his plan to take power over

⁴⁶ Cf. R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 82; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 156-157; M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, p. 201; H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, pp. 191-193; T.A. Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation. An Examination of the Philosophy of St. Mark*, Ithaca/New York, 1963, pp. 156-158.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., Mk 9:33-37, 38-50; 10:1-12, 13-16, 17-31, 35-45.

⁴⁸ In Mk 10:32-34 Jesus says explicitly that the chief priests and scribes will condemn him to death and deliver him up to the Romans, who will 'mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him,' and that 'after three days he will rise again' (v. 34). This prediction corresponds exactly with the events described by the evangelist in Mk 14-16. The condemnation is related in Mk 14:64, Jesus' handing over to the Romans in Mk 15:1, the mockery in Mk 15:17-20, the spitting in Mk 15:19, the flogging in Mk 15:15, the killing of Jesus in Mk 15:24, and his resurrection in Mk 16.

Israel, for there never was such a plan. Jesus' entire ministry is part of God's plan, which includes his death and resurrection.

c. Mark's Interpretation of Jesus as the Inaugurator of God's Kingdom in Mk 10:46-13:37

The story of the healing of Bartimaeus in Mk 10:46-52 seems to be the beginning of a new section in the Gospel.⁴⁹ Bartimaeus is the first one outside the circle of the Twelve to become aware of Jesus' identity.⁵⁰ In vv. 46-47 the evangelist relates how Bartimaeus, a blind beggar sitting at the roadside, cries out to Jesus when the latter is about to leave Jericho. In v. 47, and again in v. 48, Bartimaeus addresses Jesus as 'Son of David.' The title 'Son of David' is effectively synonymous with the royal title 'Christ.'⁵¹

In the eyes of the evangelist, Bartimaeus' confession of Jesus as the Son of David is appropriate.⁵² This is clear, *inter alia*, from the

⁴⁹ Cf. J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, pp. 102 and 107; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 32, and II, pp. 107 and 120; T.A. Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation*, p. 190. The main arguments for taking Mk 10:46 as the beginning of a new section are (1) that Bartimaeus is the first one outside the circle of the Twelve who seems to have grasped who Jesus is, and (2) that in this story the evangelist introduces the title 'Son of David,' which will return—implicitly—in Mk 11:9 and 12:35-37.

⁵⁰ The evangelist does not seem to concern himself with the question of where Bartimaeus has his knowledge from. The main thing is that Bartimaeus does recognize Jesus as the Christ. See also H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 230.

⁵¹ See Ps Sal 17:21; 4 Ezra 12:32. Cf. also Isa 11:1-10; Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12-13; Ps Sal 17:4-6; 4Q174, fragment 1, I 10-13; 4Q161, fragment 8-10, III 11-25. For the development of the concept of the Davidic Messiah, see J. Tromp, 'The Davidic Messiah in Jewish Eschatology of the First Century BCE,' in J.M. Scott (ed.), *Restoration. Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Interpretations* (Supplements to JSJ 72), Leiden, 2001, pp. 179-201.

⁵² See also J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, pp. 105-106; M. de Jonge, *Christology in Context*, p. 60; idem, 'The Earliest Christian Use of Christos,' p. 108; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 112. According to some scholars, Mark meant to put a wrong, or at least inappropriate, confession into Bartimaeus' mouth; this view is based on the fact that in Mk 12:35-37 the evangelist seems to deny Jesus' Davidic sonship (e.g., D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 183 and 189; W.H. Kelber, *Kingdom*, pp. 94-97; W.R. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark*, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 36-37). In Mk 12:35-37 Jesus raises the question of whether the Christ must be a descendant of David. The scribes are said to maintain he must. Jesus maintains, however, that the Christ cannot be a descendant of David, since in Ps 110:1 David refers to the Christ as Lord. The phrase 'David himself calls him [i.e. the Christ] Lord, so how can he be his son?' in Mk 12:37 is a rhetorical question, requiring the answer: 'the Christ cannot be a son of David.' At first sight, then, Mark's denial of the Davidic descent of the Christ in Mk 12:35-37 would seem to contradict his acceptance of the title 'Son of David' in Mk 10:47 and 48. In my view, however, the two passages are not really contradictory. In Mk 10:47-48 and Mk 12:35-37, the evangelist deals with different issues. In Mk 10:47-48 Mark uses the phrase

fact that Jesus does not correct him. He even invites Bartimaeus to come closer and say what he wants Jesus to do (vv. 49-51). When Jesus hears that Bartimaeus wants him to restore his sight (v. 51), he fulfils Bartimaeus' desire because of the latter's faith (v. 52). From the fact that Mark has Jesus approve Bartimaeus' faith in him it is plain that, according to the evangelist, the title Son of David is applicable to Jesus.

The story about the healing of Bartimaeus is followed by the account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in Mk 11:1-11. Again, as in the previous story, people outside the circle of the Twelve seem suddenly to have understood who Jesus is. The evangelist relates that as Jesus approaches Jerusalem, riding a colt, 'many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields' (v. 8).⁵³ A crowd of people are said to precede and follow Jesus, shouting 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!' (vv. 9-10).

In this story Jesus enters into Jerusalem in the way the prophet Zechariah had announced that a new king of Judah would do. In Zech 9:9 Zechariah prophesies that a future, ideal king will enter into Sion 'riding on a donkey,' just as Jesus is said to do in Mk 11:7. The people acknowledge Jesus as a Davidic king, coming on behalf of God. They spread their cloaks on the road for him. In 2 Kings 9:13 it is related that, when Jehu is anointed as king over Israel, the people 'took their cloaks and spread them for him on the bare steps' The spreading of cloaks on the road for the king to walk over is apparently a sign of respect and veneration. In Mk 11:1-11, then, Jesus is hailed by the public as a candidate for the kingship of Judah.⁵⁴

'Son of David' as an adequate title for Jesus, since in his view Jesus is rightly considered the Christ of God, and can, therefore, be called Son of David. In Mk 12:35-37, however, Mark probably deals with the issue of Jesus' real descent. Mark seems here to anticipate the possible objection of Jews to the Christians' belief in Jesus as the Christ, namely, that he was not a descendant of David. Luke's and Matthew's genealogies of Jesus in which David is one of his ancestors (Lk 3:23-38; Mt 1:1-16) seem to answer the same possible objection. Mark, in Mk 12:35-37, chooses a different solution. In his opinion, 'Son of David' is an adequate title for the Christ, but this does not necessarily mean that the Christ is a descendant of David, since David himself speaks about the Christ not as his descendant, but as his Lord.

⁵³ The alternative, longer reading of Mk 11:8 found in some of the manuscripts is certainly influenced by the Matthean parallel in Mt 21:8.

⁵⁴ Cf. R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 632; R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 184.

What is of special interest to us now is the exclamation with which the crowd hails Jesus in Mk 11:9b-10. The first half of this exclamation ('Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord,' v. 9b) clearly indicates that the crowd consider Jesus to be God's envoy *par excellence*. The second half of the exclamation ('Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David,' v. 10a) reveals their expectation that this God-given envoy has come to restore and inaugurate the glorious kingdom of David. It should be noted that there is no clear indication in the immediate context of Mk 11:10a that the reader is supposed to regard this expectation as incorrect.⁵⁵ Apparently 'the coming kingdom of our father David' (Mk 11:10a) coincides with the 'kingdom of God,' which, according to the evangelist, is announced by Jesus, and will definitively be brought by him.⁵⁶ However, in the following section, Mk 11:12-12:12, the evangelist makes it quite clear to his readers that this does not mean that Jesus is a royal pretender who will re-establish an independent Jewish kingdom as a political entity.⁵⁷ In Mk 11:12-12:12 Mark pictures a Jesus who, having been hailed inaugurator of David's kingdom at his entry into Jerusalem, has no intention at all of restoring the sovereignty of Israel, as the reader might have expected. Instead, Mark's Jesus announces the complete and definitive submission of Israel to foreign rulers.

Mk 11:12-12:12 begins with the stories about the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple in Mk 11:12-25. After his entry into Jerusalem (Mk 11:1-11), Jesus is said to leave again for Bethany with the Twelve (v. 11). The following morning the evangelist has Jesus and his disciples return from Bethany to Jerusalem (v. 12). On their way to Jerusalem, Jesus sees a fig tree in leaf, and goes over to see whether there are any figs on it (v. 13). When he does not find any, he condemns the fig tree with the curse 'no one may ever eat fruit from you again' (v. 14).

⁵⁵ Cf. R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 631; against, e.g., W.H. Kelber, *Kingdom*, pp. 96-97; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 189.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., Mk 1:15; 8:38-9:1; 13:24-27; 14:62; cf. 13:33-37.

⁵⁷ Mark does not indicate whether, in his view, the crowd in Mk 11:8-10 does or does not have a correct understanding of the kingdom to come. It may be noted that these people did not witness the predictions of Jesus' imminent death in Mk 8:31, 9:30-31, and 10:32-34, nor the discussion with Peter in Mk 8:31-33. In all these passages Jesus is alone with the Twelve.

Having arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus enters into the temple and begins to 'drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple' (vv. 15-16). Subsequently he expresses his indignation about the state of the Jerusalem temple which, although it was meant to be a house of prayer, he now found to be a 'den of robbers' (v. 17). The chief priests and scribes are said to react to Jesus' action by devising a way to kill Jesus, because they fear that his words and deeds will undermine their authority over the crowd (v. 18).

The next morning, when Jesus and his disciples pass by the fig tree again, they see that it has 'withered away to its roots' (vv. 20-21). This causes Jesus to make two remarks on prayer. He first encourages his disciples by saying that whatever they ask for in prayer in the belief that it will happen will indeed happen (vv. 23-24), and then admonishes them to forgive other people whenever they pray to God (v. 25).⁵⁸

The story of the cleansing of the temple (Mk 11:15-18) is sandwiched between that of the cursing of the fig tree (Mk 11:12-14) and the lesson from the withered tree (Mk 11:19-25). Such a sandwich composition is characteristic of Mark's style.⁵⁹ In the present case it is certainly Markan. The close connection between the stories about the fig tree, on the one hand, and the cleansing of the temple, on the other, suggests that they are also related as regards content. What message, then, could the evangelist have meant to convey to his readers in these stories?

The scene of the cleansing of the temple (Mk 11:15-18) recalls a traditional motif found in the Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish literature. 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles contain stories about kings of Judah who are said to have purified the temple in order to purge and restore

⁵⁸ In part of the textual tradition, a whole verse (Mk 11:26) is inserted after Mk 11:25. This insertion is probably due to influence from the parallel passage in Matthew's Gospel, for Mk 11:25 corresponds with Mt 6:14; the additional verse (Mk 11:26) with Mt 6:15. See B.M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*², p. 93.

⁵⁹ See F. Neirynck, *Duality in Mark. Contributions to the Study of the Markan Redaction* (BETL 31), Leuven, 1988, p. 133. Neirynck mentions as clear instances of sandwich composition Mk 3:20-21, 31-35, and 22-30; 5:21-24, 35-43, and 25-34; 6:7-13, 30, and 14-29; 11:12-14, 20-25, and 15-19; 14:1-2, 10-11, and 3-9; 14:53-54, 66-72, and 55-65.

the temple cult.⁶⁰ According to 1 Macc 4:36-61, Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers also carried out a cleansing of the temple, thus marking their victory and their regained independence.⁶¹ In Ps Sal 17:30 the restoration of the pure worship of God is mentioned as one of the tasks of the Anointed (Christ) of God. The most natural conclusion is, therefore, that the story of Jesus cleansing the temple in Mark's Gospel mirrors a tradition according to which Jesus is the ideal king of God's people, favoured by God, the Christ of God.

In Mark's Gospel, however, Jesus' cleansing of the temple not only signals that he is Israel's future king sent by God, it also indicates his rejection of the Jerusalem temple cult and those responsible for it, the Jewish religious leaders, i.e. the chief priests and scribes (cf. Mk 11:18).⁶² The true meaning of the story in Mark's Gospel is determined by its connection with the story of the cursing of the fig tree (Mk 11:12-14 and 19-21): the latter gives Jesus' intervention in the temple a prophetic meaning. Jesus' words in Mk 11:17 indicate that he takes action in the temple because the religious cult there strikes him as corrupt.⁶³ He regards the Jerusalem temple cult, therefore, as fruitless, just as he found the fig tree to be fruitless (Mk 11:13).⁶⁴ The fig tree is cursed by Jesus for its lack of fruit (Mk 11:14), and, consequently, 'withers away to its roots' (Mk 11:20). Mark's suggestion is clear: in the same way, the Jerusalem temple cult, which is as fruitless as the fig tree, will be completely destroyed.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ 2 Kings 18:4 mentions king Hezekiah of Judah; 2 Kings 22:3-23:25 king Josiah of Judah; 2 Chr 29:1-36 king Hezekiah; 2 Chr 34:3-35:19 Josiah. Compare also Neh 13:4-9, and especially Zech 14:21. See H.J. de Jonge, 'The Cleansing of the Temple in Mark 11:15 and Zechariah 14:21,' in C.M. Tuckett (ed.), *The Book of Zechariah and Its Influence*, London, 2003, pp. 87-100.

⁶¹ See also 2 Macc 10:1-8.

⁶² The interpretation of Jesus' words in Mk 11:17 as indicative of his rejection of the Jewish religious cult and those responsible for it is confirmed by the reaction of the chief priests and scribes, who immediately start planning Jesus' death out of concern for their position. Cf. also Chapter 6, pp. 192-193.

⁶³ Mark does not say what caused the corruption of the temple cult. Jesus is pictured as acting against the temple cult as such because it fails in its function as house of prayer. The evangelist does not point out, however, why this is so.

⁶⁴ For 'bearing fruit' as a metaphor for being faithful to God and religiously pure in thought and deed, see also the parable of the sower in Mk 4:1-20.

⁶⁵ See also, e.g., W.R. Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree. A Redaction-critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree Pericope in Mark's Gospel and its Relation to*

Jesus' action against the temple in Mk 11:15-18, then, is not aimed at restoring the temple cult in its full glory, as one might expect the Christ to do; it is a prophetic announcement of its destruction.⁶⁶ In the stories of the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple in Mk 11:12-25, the evangelist intends to show his readers that Jesus proclaimed the destruction of the Jewish religious centre and its cult by the Romans.

When, on Jesus' return to the temple, the chief priests, scribes, and elders, i.e. all the parties that made up the Jewish Sanhedrin,⁶⁷ ask him by virtue of what authority he expelled the merchants, Jesus' answer is the parable of the vineyard and the wicked tenants (Mk 12:1-12). As was argued already in the second chapter of the present study,⁶⁸ in this parable the evangelist has Jesus announce that God will deprive the Sanhedrin of its authority over Israel; this is God's punishment for their disobedience to him and for killing his prophets and even his final envoy, his beloved son, Jesus. God will take all leadership over Israel away from the Jewish leaders and give it to other authorities, namely the Romans (Mk 12:9). In other words, in Mk 12:1-12 Mark has Jesus herald the destruction of the last remnant of the Jews' sovereignty that remained until 70 AD, the Jewish Sanhedrin. Jesus as the Christ has not come to Jerusalem in order to restore the Jewish leadership over Palestine, as one might expect. Instead he announces its downfall.

The evangelist follows his story of Jesus' confrontation with the Jewish leaders in Mk 11:27-12:12 with an account of a number of disputes between Jesus and representatives of certain Jewish groups, concluded by the story of the widow's mite (Mk 12:13-44). These disputes mainly concern doctrinal issues, but the issues are less important than the evangelist's intention to depict Jesus as defending

the Cleansing of the Temple Tradition (Supplements to JSNT 1), Sheffield, 1980, pp. 261-262; C. Bryan, *A Preface to Mark. Notes on the Gospel in its Literary and Cultural Settings*, New York/Oxford, 1993, p. 105; H.J. de Jonge, 'The Cleansing of the Temple,' cf. D.H. Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, pp. 131 and 134.

⁶⁶ It is the sort of revolutionary, prophetic statement against the temple with which Jesus is charged in the Sanhedrin in Mk 14:58, but there the charge is claimed by the evangelist to be false.

⁶⁷ See E. Schürer, G. Vermes, *et al.*, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ II*, Edinburgh, 1979 (revised edition), pp. 212-213.

⁶⁸ Chapter 2, pp. 82-84.

his case with growing success. Within the context of the Gospel, Mk 12:13-44 seems to serve the purpose of increasing the tension between Jesus and the leading Jews who, in Mk 11:18 and 12:12, decide to arrest and kill him. Finally, in Mk 13 the evangelist returns to the issue of the imminent kingdom of God, and indicates what will be Jesus' role in its inauguration.

In Mk 13:1-2 Mark has Jesus explicitly announce the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, an event which had already been adumbrated in the stories of the withered fig tree and the cleansing of the temple (Mk 11:12-25). The evangelist has Jesus say that the temple will be destroyed in a period of heavy affliction and temptation (Mk 13:5-23) that will mark the imminence of God's kingdom. After this period the Son of Man will appear from heaven, and 'gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven' (Mk 13:24-27). There can be no doubt that in Mark's view the Son of Man is identical with Jesus. As a result of his identification with the coming Son of Man, Jesus, who—as the reader has known since Mk 8:31—must die and rise again, will also return at the end of time.

The above discussion on Mark's picture of Jesus in Mk 10:46-13:37 seems to justify the following conclusions concerning Mark's idea of Jesus as the inaugurator of God's kingdom. According to Mark, the title Son of David, applied to Jesus by Bartimaeus (Mk 10:47 and 48), is appropriate, just as is the title Christ, with which it is practically synonymous. The evangelist also considers it appropriate to say that Jesus announced and inaugurated the Davidic kingdom; 'the coming kingdom of our father David' in Mk 11:10 coincides to a certain extent with the 'kingdom of God.' Mark rejects, however, the idea that Jesus as the Christ, the Son of David, will re-establish the sovereignty of Israel. The stories in Mk 11:12-12:12 show that such a political interpretation of Jesus is incorrect. After entering into Jerusalem Mark's Jesus does not re-establish Jewish independence. Instead, the evangelist has Jesus announce the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and the last trace of Jewish autonomy, the Sanhedrin. According to Mark, Jesus' role as the Christ, the Son of David, does not involve assuming power over Israel, but implies announcing the coming of God's kingdom, as well as dying and rising from the dead,

and finally appearing from heaven at the definitive breakthrough of the new order to take care of his followers.⁶⁹

d. Mark's Rejection of the Interpretation of Jesus as 'King of the Jews' in Mk 14-15

It will be clear from the above that in Mk 1-13 the evangelist makes a distinction between a political and a non-political interpretation of the view of Jesus as the Christ—or, as the evangelist sees it, between a correct and an incorrect understanding of who Jesus is. This same distinction plays a role in Mark's account of Jesus' trial and crucifixion in Mk 14 and 15. This can be seen most clearly from a comparison between the answers Jesus gives in Mk 14:62 and 15:2 to the questions asked, respectively, by the high priest in Mk 14:61, and Pilate in Mk 15:2.

In Mk 14:53-65 the evangelist relates how after his arrest Jesus is brought before the Sanhedrin (v. 53). The members of the Sanhedrin try to find testimony against Jesus with a view to sentencing him to death, but cannot find any (v. 55). Then the high priest asks Jesus 'are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?' (v. 61). Jesus answers 'I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven' (v. 62).

It should be noticed here, that in Mk 14:62 Jesus answers the question of the high priest to the affirmative. By saying 'I am,' he admits that he is indeed the Christ, the Son of God. The rest of his answer ('and you will ... heaven,' Mk 14:62) is a kind of refinement of the high priest's words, and refers to Jesus' future parousia.⁷⁰ This accords perfectly with the meaning of the title Christ as represented in Mark's Gospel. It has been argued above that, according to Mark, Jesus, as the Christ, must die and rise again (Mk 8:31; 9:30-31; 10:32-34), and, since he is also the Son of Man, will appear at the final breakthrough of God's kingdom (Mk 13:24-27; cf. Mk 8:38). In Mk 14:61-62, then, Jesus affirms that he is the Christ.⁷¹

⁶⁹ See, e.g., Mk 8:31-33, 38; 9:31; 10:33-34; 13:26-27.

⁷⁰ See also M. de Jonge, *Christology in Context*, p. 61; idem, 'The Earliest Christian Use of Christos,' p. 108; idem, 'Ho Christos in the Passion Narratives,' p. 68; N.R. Petersen, *Literary Criticism*, pp. 74-75; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus II*, p. 281; R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium II*, pp. 437-438.

⁷¹ Mark certainly takes the title 'the Christ, the Son of God' in Mk 14:62 to be fitting. There are two reasons for this. First, the titles 'Christ' and 'Son of God' have each already been

In Mk 15:2 the situation is different. After the Sanhedrin has sentenced Jesus to death (Mk 14:64), he is brought before the Roman prefect Pilate (Mk 15:1). Pilate asks him 'Are you the king of the Jews?' (Mk 15:2). This time Jesus does not reply affirmatively. Jesus' answer in Mk 15:2 ('You say so'), although not a complete denial, still makes it clear enough that Mark's Jesus himself would not claim to be 'king of the Jews.'⁷²

The reason for Jesus' answer in Mk 15:2 is obvious. Claiming to be the 'king of the Jews' could be interpreted as claiming political power over an earthly Israel. Such a claim would accord with a political interpretation of the title Christ. Mark's Jesus, however, has no political aspirations, as has already become clear in Mk 8:31-9:2. Therefore the evangelist has Jesus dissociate himself from the insinuation of subversiveness implied in Pilate's question. Mark's Jesus accepts the designation 'king of the Jews' only in so far as it designates him as the inaugurator of God's kingdom, that is, as God's Christ; he himself would not claim the title, however, since it could characterize him as a royal pretender. Pilate is thought to understand this, for in Mk 15:6-15 he appears to be convinced that Jesus is innocent. He even tries to release him.⁷³ Pilate cannot release Jesus, how-

shown to be appropriate, 'Christ' in Mk 8:29 and 'Son of God' in, e.g., Mk 1:11 and 9:7; the evangelist objects only to their political connotations. Secondly, by saying 'I am,' Jesus answers affirmatively to the question of whether he is 'the Christ, the Son of God.' The addition 'and you will see the Son of Man ... heaven' in v. 62 is not presented as opposed to, but as an expansion of Jesus' assertion that he is 'the Christ, the Son of God' in v. 61. (See J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, pp. 121-123.) One should not regard Mark's use of the title 'Son of Man' in Mk 14:62 as a correction of the title 'Christ, Son of God' in Mk 14:61, as some scholars seem to (e.g., T.J. Weeden, *Mark*, p. 67; J.R. Donahue, 'Temple, Trial, and Royal Christology (Mk 14:53-65),' in W.H. Kelber (ed.), *The Passion in Mark. Studies on Mk 14-16*, Philadelphia, 1976, pp. 61-79, esp. p. 71).

⁷² Some scholars maintain that the phrase 'You say so' in Mk 15:2 is to be interpreted as a complete denial; e.g., R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, pp. 457-458; W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (THNT 2) II, Berlin, 1976⁶, p. 307; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, pp. 13, 924, and 932. Others maintain that in Mk 15:2 Jesus accepts the designation 'king of the Jews'; e.g., N. Perrin, 'The High Priest's Question and Jesus' Answer,' in W.H. Kelber (ed.), *The Passion in Mark. Studies on Mark 14-16*, Philadelphia, 1976, pp. 80-95, esp. p. 94. Most scholars seem to take an intermediate position, maintaining that the phrase 'You say so' in Mk 15:2 is neither affirmative, nor a complete denial; e.g., V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 579; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 300; M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, pp. 367-368; J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, pp. 125-126; M. de Jonge, *Christology in Context*, p. 61; idem, 'The Earliest Christian Use of Christos,' p. 109.

⁷³ See especially Mk 15:4, 9-10, and 14-15, where Mark has Pilate try to release Jesus, and then hand him over only under the pressure of the crowd.

ever, due to the pressure of the chief priests, who go on accusing him fiercely (Mk 15:3),⁷⁴ and stir up the crowd so that they ask for Jesus' execution (Mk 15:11).

After Jesus' trial before Pilate and the Barabbas episode (Mk 15:1-15), the phrase 'king of the Jews' returns—with minor variation—three times. First, the soldiers mock Jesus by dressing him up like a king, and saluting him 'Hail, king of the Jews!' (Mk 15:16-18). Then, when they crucify Jesus, they put up an inscription stating the charge against him and reading 'the king of the Jews' (Mk 15:26). Finally, the chief priests and scribes mock him saying 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe' (Mk 15:32).

All three times the phrase 'king of the Jews,' or its equivalent 'king of Israel,' is applied to Jesus by those who have rejected him. Jesus' opponents, then, who do not acknowledge his claim to be the inaugurator of God's kingdom, seem to characterize him as one who claims to be 'king of the Jews' in a political sense, i.e. as a royal pretender. The reader knows how wrong they are.⁷⁵ Mark's Jesus has never claimed political power over Israel, and, before Pilate, has dissociated himself from such a claim. The accusation that Jesus claimed to be 'king of the Jews' in a political sense reflects what Mark's readers have learnt to be an incorrect interpretation of Jesus'

⁷⁴ The word πολλά in Mk 15:3 must be taken as an adverb, meaning 'much,' i.e. 'fiercely,' not as an adjective used substantively. Jesus is accused fiercely, not of many things, but only of one thing, i.e. of claiming to be the king of the Jews, that is, of subversiveness. (Against, e.g., NRSV; M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, p. 368) The Markan occurrences of πολλά adverbial are given by J.C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae. Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem*, Oxford, 1909² (reprint 1968), p. 35 thus: Mk 1:45; 3:12; 5:10, 23, 38, 43; 6:20; 9:26; 15:3. Hawkins regards the other seven instances in Mark as accusatives. See also R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, pp. 924-925 and 933. Compare Chapter 5, note 41.

⁷⁵ Some scholars maintain that, ironically, Jesus' enemies in Mk 15 unwittingly proclaim the truth about him by calling him 'king of the Jews' (e.g., M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, pp. 370-371; C. Bryan, *A Preface to Mark*, p. 118). I doubt whether this interpretation of Mk 15:16-18, 26 and 32 accords with Mark's intentions. In Mk 15 only Jesus' opponents characterize him as 'king of the Jews,' while Jesus himself in Mk 15:2 declares that he would not claim the title. This makes it unlikely, in my view, that Mark intends his readers to understand that Jesus' opponents in Mk 15 proclaim the truth about him; it is more probable that Mark wishes to express that Jesus' opponents maltreat and mock him because they have misunderstood his claim to be the Christ as a claim to be the king of Israel in a political sense. If there is any irony in Mk 15 it is in the fact that Jesus' opponents have him crucified and mock him because of a claim he has never made. Cf. also R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 937.

claim to be the Christ. Mark's use of the title Christ in combination with the designation 'king of Israel' in Mk 15:32 seems to be meant to underline this. According to the evangelist, Jesus as the Christ had no political ambitions; therefore, the accusation of his opponents that he was a royal pretender is false.

The rejection of Jesus, depicted so sharply in Mk 15:16-32, is in marked contrast with the recognition of Jesus' true identity by the centurion in Mk 15:39. The evangelist relates that after Jesus 'breathed his last' (Mk 15:37) 'the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom' (Mk 15:38). In Mark's view, the rending of the temple curtain proves that God has not forsaken his Christ; it is the beginning of God's judgement on those who have rejected Jesus. Eventually, God will revenge his death by destroying the temple as a whole.⁷⁶ This is made explicit in the words of the centurion who witnesses the events and rightly interprets the rending of the curtain as proof of Jesus' special relationship with God.⁷⁷ The centurion, then, draws the correct conclusion concerning Jesus' identity. Jesus was not a royal pretender who claimed to be the king of the Jews as is insinuated by the soldiers (Mk 15:16-18), the inscription on the cross (Mk 15:26), and the chief priests and scribes (Mk 15:32). The centurion recognizes Jesus as God's special envoy, the Son of God (Mk 15:39).

CONCLUSIONS

The above has made clear that Jesus' authority and identity are among the major themes of Mark's Gospel. The evangelist pictures Jesus' whole ministry as authorized by God. God's authorization of Jesus' words and acts legitimizes his preaching. Consequently, it can be said that Mark's representation of Jesus as God's special envoy legitimizes the Christians' faithfulness to Jesus and his message.

⁷⁶ See also Chapter 2, pp. 92-93.

⁷⁷ The centurion in Mk 15:39 is qualified as ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ. The clause ὁ παρεστηκὼς means that he is standing at the foot of the cross (cf. τῶν παρεστηκότων in Mk 15:35). The clause ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ suggests that from his position he can see the rending of the temple curtain. The function of the phrase ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ is to connect the rending of the temple curtain in Mk 15:38 with Jesus' death in Mk 15:37. It is the combination of both events that leads the centurion to the conclusion that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. ἰδὼν ... ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν, v. 39). See also R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 950.

In Mark's Gospel Jesus is presented as the Son of God, who is authorized by God to announce the imminent breakthrough of God's kingdom (Mk 1:1-15). According to Mark, Jesus' identity can fittingly be described with the pre-Markan, traditional titles 'Christ' and 'Son of David.' Likewise, it is correct to regard Jesus as the inaugurator of the new, ideal, and glorious kingdom which God will accord to his faithful. However, although the evangelist retains the traditional christological titles and the traditional terminology concerning an ideal kingdom to come, he stresses that the political connotations of these titles and of that kingdom must be rejected.

Mark's Jesus tries to make the non-political aim of his ministry quite clear. As soon as his disciples have discovered that he is the Christ (Mk 8:29), he foretells his imminent death (Mk 8:31-33). He stresses the non-political nature of his ministry by repeating this prediction twice (Mk 9:31; 10:33-34; cf. Mk 9:12-13; 10:45). Moreover, after his triumphal entry into Jerusalem he does not restore the sovereignty of Israel as one might expect the Christ, the Son of David, to do. Instead, the evangelist has Jesus announce the destruction of what remains of the greatness of the Jewish nation (Mk 11:12-12:12). Thus Mark underscores that establishing a great and independent Israel is no part of Jesus' ministry as the Christ. Finally, the evangelist has Jesus dissociate himself from any political claim before the Roman prefect Pilate (Mk 15:2). Mark's Jesus is not a royal pretender, but rather God's final agent, the Son of God (Mk 15:26).

These observations warrant the conclusion that in his Gospel Mark is concerned, *inter alia*, to reject the political connotations of the title Christ when applied to Jesus. As has been argued above, the political connotations of the title Christ might lead outsiders to consider the Christian community a rebellious movement, opposing Roman rule in Palestine. As a result, the Christians might be persecuted and delivered up to the Roman authorities. The fact that in his Gospel Mark plays down the political connotations of the title Christ may indicate that he intends to defend the Christian community against the suspicion of subversiveness that could arise against them. In the following chapter I will discuss some further evidence that points in the same direction.

CHAPTER FIVE

JESUS' COMMANDS TO SILENCE IN MARK'S GOSPEL

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter led to the conclusion that the Gospel of Mark gives expression to the idea that Jesus, although rightly called 'Christ,' was not a royal pretender in a political sense, but rather God's final envoy who will definitively inaugurate God's kingdom on his return from heaven. Mark's representation of Jesus as someone without political ambitions is underscored by a remarkable literary motif in Mark's Gospel, that is, the motif of Jesus' commands to silence.¹

Since in 1901 William Wrede published his classic study on what is usually known as the 'Messianic Secret,'² the motif of Jesus' commands to silence has been the subject of much scholarly debate.³ Therefore, I will briefly discuss Wrede's theory of the 'Messianic Secret' and some of its problems, before proceeding with my own analysis of the motif of Jesus' commands to silence in Mark's Gospel. I intend to argue that Mark introduced this motif to sustain his view that Jesus had no ambition to assume political power, and no intention of mobilizing the masses in preparation for a revolt.

¹ These commands to silence are found in Mk 1:25, 1:34, 1:44, 3:12, 5:43, 7:36, 8:26, 8:30, and 9:9.

² W. Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien. Zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums*, Göttingen, 1901.

³ For overviews of the numerous theories concerning the Messianic Secret, see, e.g., J.L. Blevins, *The Messianic Secret in Markan Research. 1901-1976*, Washington, 1981; C.M. Tuckett, 'The Problem of the Messianic Secret,' in C.M. Tuckett (ed.), *The Messianic Secret* (IRT 1), Philadelphia/London, 1983, pp. 1-28; idem, art. 'Messianic Secret,' *ABD* IV, pp. 797-800; H. Räisänen, *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark's Gospel* (transl. C.M. Tuckett), Edinburgh, 1990, pp. 38-75.

1. WREDE'S THEORY OF THE 'MESSIANIC SECRET'

Prior to Wrede's study on the so-called 'Messianic Secret,' the motif of Jesus' commands to silence in Mark's Gospel was often seen as an element of the preaching of the historical Jesus. It was thought to show that Jesus had tried to prevent the rise of a political interpretation of his messiahship among the people by revealing his identity as the Christ only gradually.⁴ Wrede, however, maintained that the silencing commands were all non-historical, and later additions to the tradition.⁵

Wrede argued that the phenomenon of these injunctions to silence was related to another non-historical element in Mark's Gospel, the so-called 'parable theory' propounded in Mk 4:10-11 and 33-34. According to this 'parable theory,' Jesus couched his teaching in parables in order to hide its import from the multitude and reveal it only to an inner circle of followers. Part of this secret teaching was, in Wrede's view, Jesus' messiahship.⁶ Wrede suggested that also the fact that Jesus is depicted as sometimes fleeing the crowd (Mk 1:35; 3:13), and healing or giving instruction in the presence only of a small group of followers (Mk 1:29; 7:17; 9:28, 33; 10:10; 13:3-4) may be seen as connected to the secrecy motif.⁷ In addition, according to Wrede, Mark's image of the disciples as often failing to understand Jesus should also be seen as part of the motif.⁸ On the basis of Mk 9:9, Wrede argued that according to Mark and the Christian group to which he belonged the secret of Jesus' messiahship, as well

⁴ See, e.g., H.J. Holtzmann, *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament I. Die Synoptiker*, Tübingen/Leipzig, 1901³, p. 148, at Mk 8:30; B. Weiss, *Die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas* (KEK 1, 2), Göttingen, 1901⁹, p. 132, also at Mk 8:30; idem, *Das Leben Jesu*, Berlin, 1884², vol. 2, p. 264.

⁵ W. Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, pp. 22-51. Wrede regards as part of this motif not only Jesus' commands to silence in Mk 1:25, 1:34, 1:44, 3:12, 5:43, 7:36, 8:26, 8:30, and 9:9, but also the passages in which Jesus tries to keep his whereabouts a secret (Mk 7:24; 9:30-31), and the passage in which the crowd attempts to silence Bartimaeus (Mk 10:48).

⁶ W. Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, pp. 54-65.

⁷ W. Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, pp. 51-54 and 63-64. Wrede is undecided with regard to the historicity of these passages, and therefore also with regard to the question of whether they are part of Mark's secrecy motif.

⁸ W. Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, pp. 81-114. Wrede strongly denies that there is any progression in the disciples' understanding.

as the true meaning of the parables, had been disclosed after Jesus' resurrection.⁹

Wrede concluded that the various elements of the secrecy motif as he discerned it in Mark's Gospel were not the product of a single author, but must have originated in the larger circle in which the evangelist lived.¹⁰ They were introduced into the story of Jesus' earthly life as a theological motif.¹¹ The origin of this motif was described by Wrede as follows. According to the earliest Christian belief Jesus did not become the Messiah until his resurrection.¹² Gradually, however, the belief arose that Jesus had been the Messiah already during his lifetime.¹³ The rise of this belief caused the secrecy motif to come into being. The secrecy motif was, according to Wrede, meant to eliminate the tension between the awareness that Jesus had become the Messiah only after his death, and the belief that he was such already during his lifetime: Jesus had indeed been the Messiah while on earth, but had kept this a secret that had only become public after his resurrection.¹⁴

Wrede's theory of 1901 gained increasing acceptance during the following decades, especially among German form-critics. The form-critics adopted Wrede's views, albeit with an important modification: unlike Wrede, they considered the Markan redactor responsible for the secrecy motif.¹⁵

Several alternative theories have been proposed concerning the origin of the motif. Martin Dibelius, for instance, proposed the so-called 'apologetic interpretation' of Mark's Messianic Secret. In Dibelius' view, Mark introduced the secrecy motif in order to explain why Jesus' messiahship had not been universally recognized during his lifetime.¹⁶ Hans Jürgen Ebeling, on the other hand, maintained that the secrecy motif was a Markan redactional element introduced

⁹ W. Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, pp. 66-71.

¹⁰ W. Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, pp. 145-146.

¹¹ W. Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, e.g., pp. 66, 71, and 79-80.

¹² W. Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, pp. 213-214 and 216-217.

¹³ W. Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, p. 218.

¹⁴ W. Wrede, *Messiasgeheimnis*, pp. 227-228.

¹⁵ E.g., M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, Tübingen, 1919, pp. 27, 38, and 63-64; R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (FRLANT 29), Göttingen, 1921, p. 211; idem, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Tübingen, 1965^s, pp. 33-34.

¹⁶ M. Dibelius, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 51, 58-59, and 64.

in order to highlight the revelation of Jesus' glory.¹⁷ This theory has become known as the 'epiphanic interpretation' of the Messianic Secret. Yet others have regarded the secrecy motif as part of Mark's attempt to stress the importance of Jesus' suffering and crucifixion. Theodore J. Weeden, for instance, has argued that the secrecy motif in Mark's Gospel is part of the evangelist's polemic against the so-called 'divine-man' christology, which regarded Jesus primarily as a miracle worker.¹⁸

None of the explanations of the origin of the secrecy motif mentioned here is entirely convincing. Wrede's own theory fails to carry conviction mainly because there is no evidence that Mark, who in my view is responsible for at least part of the secrecy motif,¹⁹ was aware of a non-messianic interpretation of Jesus' person and ministry.²⁰ All alternative theories proposed present other problems. The 'apologetic interpretation' seems to clarify Mark's parable theory in Mk 4:11-12 and 33-34, for in these passages the evangelist does indeed seem to be concerned with the question why some people accept the Christian message while others do not. The fact that Jesus' commands to silence are sometimes ignored (e.g., Mk 1:45; 7:36), however, remains unexplained.²¹ The 'epiphanic interpretation' can explain why some of Jesus' silencing commands are disobeyed; Jesus' glorious deeds are so impressive that people cannot keep silent about them. The weakness of this theory, however, lies in the fact that some of Jesus' injunctions to silence seem to be obeyed (e.g., Mk 5:43; 8:31; 9:9).²² Finally, Weeden's theory appears to clarify why Mark has Jesus try

¹⁷ H.J. Ebeling, *Das Messiasgeheimnis und die Botschaft des Marcus-Evangelisten* (Beihfte zur ZNW 19), Berlin, 1939, pp. 114-224, esp. pp. 144-146, 170-171, 179, 200-201, 220, 221-224.

¹⁸ T.J. Weeden, *Mark. Traditions in Conflict*, Philadelphia, 1971, pp. 138-158.

¹⁹ See also, e.g., J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (EKK 2) I, Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1978, pp. 85, 133, and 169; II pp. 10, 12, and 40; M.D. Hooker, *A Commentary to the Gospel according to St. Mark* (BNTC), London, 1991, p. 68; cf., e.g., J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27), New York/London, 2000, p. 526; against, e.g., R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (HTKNT 2) I, Freiburg/Basel/Wien, 1976, pp. 133-136, 148; II, p. 37.

²⁰ See also C.M. Tuckett, 'The Problem of the Messianic Secret,' p. 12; idem, art. 'Messianic Secret,' p. 798.

²¹ See also C.M. Tuckett, 'The Problem of the Messianic Secret,' p. 13; idem, art. 'Messianic Secret,' p. 798; H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 58.

²² See also C.M. Tuckett, 'The Problem of the Messianic Secret,' pp. 14-15; idem, art. 'Messianic Secret,' p. 798; H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, pp. 61-62.

to keep his healing and miracles a secret. But here the problem is that not all Jesus' healing and miracles are followed by a command to silence (e.g., Mk 1:29-31; 7:24-30).²³ In other words, some of the alternative theories proposed explain part of the evidence. None of the explanations, however, seems to be able to account for all the elements that have been considered since Wrede to be part of the Messianic Secret.

This observation has led scholars to conclude that Wrede may have given the Messianic Secret in Mark's Gospel too wide a scope. Many scholars today agree that the Messianic Secret as conceived by Wrede included elements that are not connected as closely as he assumed. Serious doubts have arisen as to whether these elements can be explained by a single theory.²⁴ It seems, therefore, that if one wishes to obtain a clearer insight into the evangelist's intentions, the elements included in Wrede's Messianic Secret theory must be examined first as separate motifs. Only after they have been studied in their own right can their possible relationship to one another be studied fruitfully.

The only feature of Mark that concerns us now is the motif of Jesus' commands to silence. In light of the above, the present discussion can justifiably be limited to the analysis of these commands; it is unnecessary to go into the question of their relationship to any of the other elements Wrede supposed to be part of the Messianic Secret.

The silencing commands in Mark's Gospel are usually distinguished into two types according to the functions they are intended to fulfil in Mark's narrative.²⁵ The first type of silencing command con-

²³ See also C.M. Tuckett, 'The Problem of the Messianic Secret,' p. 18; cf. H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 68.

²⁴ An extensive discussion of this question is found in Heikki Räisänen's *Messianic Secret*. Räisänen concludes that Wrede's Messianic Secret comprised elements which are only relatively loosely connected with each other; only the motif of Jesus' secret healings and the motif of the injunctions to keep silent about Jesus' identity are related (see H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, esp. pp. 242-243). See also, e.g., E. Trocmé, 'Is there a Markan Christology?,' in B. Lindars, S.S. Smalley (edd.), *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament* (FS C.F.D. Moule), Cambridge, 1973, pp. 3-13, esp. pp. 8-10; J.D.G. Dunn, 'The Messianic Secret in Mark,' in C.M. Tuckett (ed.), *The Messianic Secret* (IRT 1), Philadelphia/London, 1983, pp. 116-131, esp. pp. 117-119.

²⁵ See also, e.g., H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, pp. 242-243; U. Luz, 'The Secrecy Motif and the Marcan Christology,' in C.M. Tuckett (ed.), *The Messianic Secret* (IRT 1), Philadelphia/London, 1983, pp. 75-96, esp. pp. 86-88.

cerns Jesus' identity as the Christ; these commands are sometimes regarded as 'the messianic secret *proper*.'²⁶ The second type concerns orders to keep silent about Jesus' healings and miracles. I intend to argue that the evangelist introduced both types in order to bring out the notion that Jesus had no ambition to assume any public, political power.

2. JESUS' EFFORT TO HIDE HIS IDENTITY AS THE CHRIST

The first type of silencing command constitutes a remarkable characteristic of Mark's Jesus, i.e. his sustained effort to prevent others from disclosing that he is the Christ, the Son of God.²⁷ In Mk 1:25 an unclean spirit is silenced by Jesus after declaring he knows that Jesus is the 'Holy One of God.' In Mk 1:34 the evangelist says that Jesus, in casting out many demons, 'would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.' In Mk 3:11-12 Mark says something similar, reporting that 'whenever the unclean spirits saw him they fell down before him and shouted, "You are the Son of God!" But he [i.e. Jesus] sternly ordered them not to make him known.' In these three passages Mark has Jesus order the demons to be silent in order to prevent them from making his identity as the Son of God known to the bystanders.²⁸

²⁶ See, e.g., H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 242.

²⁷ It is important to note that in the tradition underlying Mark's use of the titles ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ and ὁ χριστός these titles denote almost the same. In the Hebrew Scriptures the title 'Son of God,' like the title 'Christ,' is mostly used to designate kings; see, e.g., 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7 (note that in v. 2 the king is also referred to as 'the Christ of the Lord'); Ps 88:27-28 LXX. In 4Q246 II 1 the title 'Son of God' seems to refer to a future, messianic king (note the strong parallels between 4Q246 and Lk 1:32-35; for a discussion of this passage see, e.g., M.A. Knibb, 'Messianism in the Pseudepigrapha in the Light of the Scrolls,' *DSD* 2 (1995), pp. 165-184, esp. pp. 174-177); cf. also 4 Ezra 13:37. It can safely be inferred that, in the Christian and Jewish tradition to which Mark goes back, the titles 'Christ' and 'Son of God' were both royal titles which were also applied to the ideal, future, God-given king who, in some Hellenistic Jewish writings, is said to come in order to restore the sovereignty of the Jewish people. See M. de Jonge, 'The Earliest Christian use of Christos. Some Suggestions,' in H.J. de Jonge (ed.), *Jewish Eschatology, Early Christian Christology, and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. Collected Essays of Marinus de Jonge* (Supplements to NT 63), Leiden, 1991, pp. 102-124, esp. p. 120, note 44.

²⁸ Some scholars take the silencing command in Mk 1:25 as part of the exorcism (e.g., R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* I, p. 136; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 201; R.H. Gundry, *Mark. A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, Grand Rapids, 1993, pp. 77 and 84). In light of Mk 1:34 and 3:11-12, however, it is likely that the command to 'be silent' in Mk 1:25 is meant to be a

Jesus' commands to silence in Mk 1:25, 1:34, and 3:12 seem to have the intended result, and the utterances of the demons do not appear to give the bystanders any insight into who Jesus is. Those who witness Jesus' preaching and exorcism in Mk 1:22-26 are said to be left wondering where Jesus' teaching and authority to exorcize demons come from (Mk 1:27). Their reaction in Mk 1:27 ('he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him') indicates that they are supposed to have heard Jesus speaking to the demon in Mk 1:25. Besides, there is no indication in the text that from the moment the demon addressed Jesus as 'the Holy One of God' in Mk 1:24 until the moment Jesus put him to silence in Mk 1:25 anything has changed in the constellation uniting Jesus, the possessed, and the audience in the synagogue. Consequently, those present in the synagogue of Capernaum are thought to have heard how the demon addressed Jesus in Mk 1:24. However, even though they witness the conversation between Jesus and the possessed, as well as the exorcism (Mk 1:24-26), they do not draw the appropriate conclusion about Jesus' identity.²⁹ Jesus' attempts to silence the demons mentioned in Mk 1:34 and 3:11-12 seem to be effective as well, for apart from Jesus himself and the demons he exorcizes, none of the characters in the Gospel understands who Jesus is until his miraculous healings and supernatural abilities lead Peter to the conclusion that he is the Christ (Mk 8:29).³⁰

As soon as Peter recognizes Jesus as the Christ (Mk 8:29), Jesus, as the evangelist puts it, 'sternly ordered them [i.e. his disciples] not to tell anyone about him' (Mk 8:30). The fact that Jesus' prohibition in Mk 8:30 is a reaction to Peter's confession in Mk 8:29 indicates that what the disciples—like the demons in Mk 1:25, 1:34, and 3:11-12—are not allowed to reveal is Jesus' identity.³¹

reaction to the demon revealing Jesus' identity in Mk 1:24. See, e.g., M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, p. 65; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (WBC 34a), Dallas, 1989, pp. 58 and 66-67; cf. J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I*, p. 81; H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 170; T.A. Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation. An Examination of the Philosophy of St. Mark's Gospel*, Ithaca/New York, 1963, pp. 71 and 78; F. Fendler, *Studien zum Markusevangelium. Zur Gattung, Chronologie, Messiasgeheimnistheorie und Überlieferung des zweiten Evangeliums* (GthA 49), Göttingen, 1991, p. 129.

²⁹ Cf. H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 171; T.A. Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation*, pp. 71-72.

³⁰ Cf. Chapter 4, p. 153.

³¹ Cf. U. Luz, 'Secrecy Motif,' p. 83; T.A. Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation*, p. 68; F. Fendler,

A similar prohibition is given by Jesus in Mk 9:9, immediately following the story of Jesus' transfiguration (Mk 9:2-8). While descending the mountain on which this event took place, Jesus forbids the three disciples who witnessed it 'to tell anyone about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead' (Mk 9:9). The phrase 'what they had seen' certainly refers to Jesus' heavenly appearance and his conversation with Moses and Elijah in Mk 9:3-4, but also the cloud that overshadows the disciples, and especially the voice saying 'This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him!' (Mk 9:7).³² Jesus' command to silence in Mk 9:9, then, is once again a prohibition against telling anyone that he is the Christ, the Son of God.³³

Particularly striking in Mk 9:9 is the evangelist's comment that the disciples were not allowed to speak about Jesus' identity 'until after the Son of Man had risen from the death.' Apparently in Mark's view the secret of Jesus' messiahship was not to be revealed until after his death and resurrection. In Mk 9:9 the evangelist does not say why Jesus' identity should not be made known earlier, but the reason can easily be guessed. For in Mk 8:31-9:1 Mark already had Jesus make clear that the correct interpretation of his messiahship must take into account his imminent death and resurrection. Although Jesus claims to be the Christ, he has, according to the evangelist, no intentions to seize power in a political sense; instead he must die and rise from the dead, and appear from heaven to be present at the definitive establishment of God's reign on earth.³⁴ After Jesus' resurrection this will be evident, and Jesus' messiahship can no longer be misunderstood. It is likely, therefore, that by trying to have his true identity revealed only after his resurrection, Mark's Jesus intends to prevent the people from embracing the idea of him as a royal pretender who wishes to assume political power over Israel.³⁵

Studien zum Markusevangelium, p. 131.

³² Mark's description of Jesus' transfiguration and meeting with Moses and Elijah in Mk 9:2-4, and his account of the voice from heaven calling Jesus God's Son in Mk 9:7 are two devices to express the same message: that Jesus has a special relationship with God and belongs to the heavenly realm because he is God's eschatological envoy. Cf. also H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 188; F. Fendler, *Studien zum Markusevangelium*, p. 132; U. Luz, 'Secrecy Motif,' p. 86.

³³ Cf. T. A. Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation*, pp. 68-69; U. Luz, 'Secrecy Motif,' p. 86.

³⁴ See Chapter 4, pp. 154-157.

³⁵ Cf. J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus II*, pp. 15, 19, and 40-41; D. Lührmann, *Das*

In sum, it can be said that Jesus' commands to silence in Mk 1:22, 1:34, 3:12, 8:30, and 9:9 all concern Jesus' identity as the Christ, the Son of God. They are meant to make clear to the reader that Jesus actively tried to prevent a political interpretation of his messiahship from arising among the people until the course of events would prove it to be wrong.

To this conclusion I wish to add two remarks regarding the scope of the motif of the secrecy of Jesus' identity. First, it should be noted that Jesus' commands to silence discussed above are meant to hide his identity from the crowd, not from the disciples. Mark even expects his readers to understand that the disciples should know who Jesus is. This is clear from the fact that Mark says that Jesus rebuked the disciples for their lack of insight into the question of his identity (Mk 4:40; 8:17-21), and explicitly encouraged them to think about it. He even elicits from them the right typification of his person (Mk 8:27-29). Apparently the disciples are expected to be aware of Jesus' true identity, while the crowd is supposed not to know who Jesus is.³⁶ This observation makes it understandable why Jesus does not silence the demon who addresses him as the Son of God in Mk 5:7. Each time a demon calls him the Christ in public, the evangelist has Jesus silence him (Mk 1:25; 1:34; 3:12). In Mk 5:7, however, Jesus does not rebuke the demon because he is alone with the Twelve.³⁷

My second remark concerns the time limit Mark has Jesus add to his command in Mk 9:9. It has been argued above that in Mk 1:25, 1:34, 3:12, 8:30, and 9:9 Mark's Jesus tries to preclude the rise of a false image of his ministry by trying to keep his identity as the Christ a secret from the crowd until after his death and resurrection. Certain characters outside the circle of Jesus' disciples, however, seem to discover spontaneously that Jesus is the Christ. In Mk 10:46-52 Bar-

Markusevangelium (HNT 3), Tübingen, 1987, p. 157; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 262; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, pp. 150-151; F. Fendler, *Studien zum Markusevangelium*, p. 144; U. Luz, 'Secrecy Motif,' pp. 85-87.

³⁶ See also T.A. Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation*, pp. 150-151.

³⁷ A similar explanation is given by J.D. Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel*, Philadelphia, 1983, pp. 18-19. Kingsbury maintains, however, that in Mk 5:7 there is no command to silence because Jesus is thought to be *alone* with the demoniac. The plural of the verb ἡλθον in Mk 5:1 reveals that this cannot be right. The subject of ἡλθον is Jesus and the disciples, since they were the ones who crossed the lake in Mk 4:35-41. The people present in Mk 5:7, then, are Jesus, the disciples, and the possessed.

timaeus hails Jesus as the Son of David (Mk 10:47-48), and the crowd in Mk 11:1-11 welcome Jesus as the inaugurator of the renewed Davidic kingdom (Mk 11:9-10). The evangelist does not bother to tell the reader where they have obtained their knowledge, nor whether in his eyes their interpretation of Jesus' messiahship is right. And in neither case is Jesus said to urge them to remain silent about their insight.³⁸

From the preceding observations it can be inferred that from the story of Bartimaeus onwards Jesus' identity is no longer a secret to the people.³⁹ Unexpectedly, Jesus fails to hide his messiahship from the crowd. In the light of the commands to silence recorded earlier in the Gospel, it is remarkable that the evangelist does not seem to mark the turning point of the 'breaking' of the secret. It is also strange that the fact that Jesus suddenly stops hiding his identity does not seem to have any consequences in Mark's narrative. The reason why Jesus hid his messiahship was that he wished to preclude a false understanding of it. Now that his identity is known, however, Mark does not even indicate whether he thinks the understanding of those who gained insight into it is right or wrong. The issue of the correct interpretation of Jesus' identity as the Christ is not taken up again until Mk 14-15.

There seems to be a simple explanation for the unexpected change

³⁸ Some have argued that the crowd ordering Bartimaeus to be quiet in Mk 10:48 is to be interpreted as an injunction to silence which is connected with the motif of Jesus' secret identity (e.g., H.J. Ebeling, *Messiasgeheimnis*, p. 136). It is, however, unlikely that the crowd, from whom Mark's Jesus has tried to keep his identity a secret, should now be believed to be trying to preserve the secret of Jesus' identity. The crowd silencing Bartimaeus is more easily explained as a literary device serving to increase the tension within the story. See, e.g., H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, pp. 230-231.

³⁹ Cf. U. Luz, 'Secrecy Motif,' p. 87; H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, pp. 229-230. Some scholars have tried to 'save' the secrecy motif by arguing that the secret of Jesus' identity remains unbroken until his death and resurrection as is intended according to Jesus' words in Mk 9:9. J.D. Kingsbury, for instance, maintains that the secret of Jesus' identity is not that he is the Christ or Son of David, but that he is the Son of God. According to Kingsbury, 'this secret remains in force from the time Jesus first appears at his baptism to the time of his crucifixion (15:39) and resurrection (16:6-7).' (J.D. Kingsbury, *Christology*, pp. 13-23, esp. pp. 21-22.) It is not helpful, however, to make a distinction between Jesus' identity as the Christ and as the Son of God, as Kingsbury does, since in Mark the two titles denote virtually the same. Moreover, Kingsbury's view does not solve the problem that the secret is disclosed to some characters in the Gospel before Jesus' resurrection, for even if one ignores Mk 10:47-48 and 11:9-10, it cannot be denied that Jesus' identity is revealed in Mk 14:61-62 and 15:39, in both cases still prior to Jesus' resurrection.

in the way Mark treats the secrecy motif. It should be noted that from the story of Bartimaeus onwards Mark no longer concentrates on the topic of Jesus' identity. In Mk 1:1-8:30 the narrative expresses the notion that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Subsequently, in Mk 8:31-10:45, the evangelist stresses the idea that, as the Christ, Jesus must die, rise again, and appear at the definitive breakthrough of God's kingdom. In the next part of the Gospel, Mk 10:46-13:37, the evangelist's interest seems, however, to have shifted. In Mk 10:46-13:37 Mark again brings out the idea that Jesus does not aim at political power, but this time from a different perspective from that in Mk 8:31-10:45. In Mk 10:46-13:37 Mark emphasizes his view that Jesus is not a royal pretender by saying that Israel will not be delivered from the Roman occupation. Instead, it will lose even the last remnant of its sovereignty as a punishment for its disobedience to God and rejection of his Christ (Mk 11:12-12:12). Jesus will play an important part when God's kingdom is finally realized, and will gather those who have remained faithful to him (Mk 13:24-27). In Mk 10:46-13:37, then, the focus is no longer on Jesus' identity, but on the coming kingdom of God, as well as on the question of whether or not it will imply the restoration of the earthly kingdom of Israel.

If then in Mk 10:46-13:37 the evangelist no longer concentrates on the issue of Jesus' identity, it is understandable that he does not dwell on the fact that people outside the circle of the Twelve have discovered that Jesus is the Christ. Apparently Mark feels he has already made his point that Jesus, although he is the Christ, has no intention of making the people believe that he will re-establish a free and independent Israel.

3. JESUS' COMMANDS TO KEEP SILENT ABOUT HIS MIRACULOUS HEALINGS

In Mark's Gospel there is another series of commands to silence given by Jesus. These are not reactions to an impending disclosure of the secret of Jesus' identity, but stern orders not to tell anyone about miracles he has just performed. These commands to silence appear in Mk 1:44, 5:43, and 7:36. The one in Mk 1:44 includes a striking indication of the reason for Jesus' command to keep silent about his miraculous deeds.

In Mk 1:40-45 the evangelist relates how Jesus heals a leper. After healing the man, Mark has Jesus warn him not to tell to anyone, but to make sure that he is declared pure by the priest and makes the sacrifice prescribed for a cleansing such as he has experienced (Mk 1:44). The man does not keep silent,⁴⁰ however, and starts spreading the news about what has happened to him (Mk 1:45).⁴¹ Mark says that as a result Jesus 'could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter' (Mk 1:45). The end of the story as told in Mk 1:45 implies that the preaching of the cured man occasions such a concourse of people that Jesus cannot openly stay in the town without bringing about chaos. He has to retreat to open fields because of the people who start coming to him from everywhere. According to Mark, however, Jesus had ordered the cured man to keep silent about his miraculous recovery (Mk 1:44), and thus tried to prevent such a gathering of people.

The reasons for Jesus' commands to silence in Mk 5:43 and 7:36

⁴⁰ Most commentators agree that ὁ δέ in Mk 1:45 refers to the leper (e.g., D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 55; J. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I*, pp. 90 and 94; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, pp. 76-79; M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, p. 82; R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium I*, p. 146). There are indeed good arguments in favour of this position. First, whenever ὁ δέ occurs in Mark's Gospel, it indicates a change of subject. In the former sentence the subject of ἐξέβαλε (v. 43) and λέγει (v. 44) was Jesus; ὁ δέ in v. 45, then, refers to the leper. Secondly, if Jesus was meant to be the subject of the main verb (ἤρξατο) in v. 45, the word αὐτόν in v. 45 would be superfluous, since 'Mark elsewhere introduces an accusative subject into infinitival phrases beginning with ὥστε, "so that," only to indicate a different subject from that of the main verb, ... whereas he does not introduce an accusative subject of the infinitive when the subject of the main verb carries over' (R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 98). See also J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 207; H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 147 and note 15; J. Swetnam, 'Some Remarks on the Meaning of ὁ δὲ ἐξελεθών in Mark 1,45,' *Biblica* 68 (1987), pp. 245-249; against J.K. Elliott, 'The Conclusion of the Pericope of the Healing of the Leper and Mark 1.45,' *JTS* 22 (1971), pp. 153-157.

⁴¹ The word πολλά in Mk 1:45 is an adverb; the cured is not proclaiming many things, but only one thing, the fact that Jesus has cured him. The word πολλά is used to express that he is proclaiming this often and everywhere. (See Chapter 4, note 74; cf. J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 207 ('greatly'); J. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I*, p. 90 ('eifrig'); D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 54 ('vielfach'); H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 147 ('vigorously'); against R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, p. 77.) The phrase διαφημίζειν τὸν λόγον in Mk 1:45 is likely to mean 'telling the story far and wide,' not 'preaching the gospel.' Although Mark does sometimes use the noun ὁ λόγος to refer to the gospel (e.g., Mk 2:2; 4:14), he uses it also in the sense of 'word' or 'story' (e.g., Mk 5:36; 7:29; 8:32). In Mark's Gospel the verb διαφημίζειν occurs only in Mk 1:45. The usual Greek expression in Mark for 'proclaiming the gospel' includes the noun λόγος or εὐαγγέλιον and, as verb, either λαλεῖν or εἰπεῖν, or κηρύσσειν. (Cf. J. Swetnam, 'Mark 1,45,' pp. 247-248; against J.K. Elliott, 'Healing of the Leper,' pp. 154-156.)

are less clear. In Mk 5:43 Jesus' command follows the raising of Jairus' daughter. The evangelist does not tell his readers whether this command was kept or broken, nor why it is given.

In Mk 7:36 the command to silence follows the healing of a man who was deaf and dumb. In this verse Mark says that after curing the man 'Jesus ordered them to tell no one' what had happened. The plural 'them' (αὐτοῖς, v. 36) is remarkable in view of what is said in v. 33, i.e. that before healing the man Jesus took him 'aside in private, away from the crowd' (Mk 7:33). The most plausible solution is that the evangelist distinguishes here between the crowd and the people who are said to have brought the deaf-and-dumb man to Jesus in Mk 7:32. The latter group are probably thought to witness the healing miracle. The word 'them' in v. 36, then, refers to the cured man and his companions.⁴²

Jesus' command to silence in Mk 7:36 suggests that the crowd are supposed not to know that Jesus cured the disabled man, and that the cured man and his companions are not allowed to tell it to them. However, those whom Jesus ordered to keep silent in Mk 7:36 do not seem to obey, for the evangelist adds that 'the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it' (Mk 7:36). They seem to do so from enthusiasm about Jesus' actions, since in Mk 7:37 it is added that 'they were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."'

The evangelist does not make it explicit why Jesus forbids the cured man and those who accompany him to speak in Mk 7:36, but the reason is probably supposed to be similar to that in Mk 1:44. For it is likely that Jesus' order not to speak about the healing of the deaf-and-dumb man in Mk 7:36 is meant to inform the reader that Jesus wishes to restrain the enthusiastic reaction of the people referred to in Mk 7:37, but does not succeed. In any case, the message of Mk 7:36, and probably also that of Mk 5:43, seems to be that in performing healings and miracles Jesus is not soliciting the approval and admiration of the crowd.

Finally, attention should be drawn here to Jesus' remark in Mk

⁴² See J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus I*, p. 298; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, p. 479; against R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium I*, p. 398; H. Räisänen, *Messianic Secret*, p. 149; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 391.

8:26. In Mk 8:22-26 the evangelist relates that at Jesus' arrival in Bethsaida a blind man was brought to him (Mk 8:22). Mark then says that Jesus 'took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village' (Mk 8:23). After Jesus has cured his blindness (Mk 8:24-25), he sends the man home saying 'Do not even go into the village' (Mk 8:26).⁴³ Although this remark is not an explicit ban on speaking, it is probably meant to serve the same purpose as the commands to silence in Mk 1:44, 5:43, and 7:36. The evangelist does not say why Jesus cures the man outside the village, nor why he orders him not to go back into the village, but the suggestion is that Jesus is trying to avoid the public.⁴⁴ So probably Jesus' command in Mk 8:26, like those in Mk 1:44, 5:43, and 7:37, is meant to show that in performing a miracle Jesus is not trying to impress the crowd, but rather seeks to avoid their overexcited reaction.

This intention of Jesus contrasts sharply with the actual effect of his activity as described by Mark, for wherever he comes large crowds of people are said to follow him, and his popularity seems to increase continuously. Immediately after he has miraculously cured the possessed man in the synagogue in Capernaum (Mk 1:21-28), his fame spreads all over Galilee (Mk 1:28), and people start to bring to him 'all who were sick and possessed with demons' (Mk 1:32). The preaching of the leper who is cured by Jesus (Mk 1:40-45) causes such enthusiasm among the people that Jesus can no longer enter the city overtly (Mk 1:45). When after some time Jesus goes down to the Sea of Galilee, he is said to be followed by a large crowd of people from all over Palestine and beyond (Mk 3:7-8). These people are so eager to meet and touch him that he orders his disciples 'to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush him' (Mk 3:9). And when in Mk 4:1 Jesus teaches the crowd again by the lakeside, such a very large crowd is said to gather around him 'that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land.' Also in the following chapters of the Gospel, the enthusiasm of the crowds and their large

⁴³ The shorter reading is probably the original one; the alternative readings can all be explained as attempts to clarify the shorter reading. See B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament. A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (fourth revised edition)*, Stuttgart, 1994², p. 84.

⁴⁴ See also D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 140; cf. J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* I, p. 314; M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, p. 199; against R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 419.

numbers are a repeatedly recurring theme (Mk 5:21; 6:31; 6:53-56; 9:15).

Jesus' commands in Mk 1:44, 5:43, 7:36, and 8:26 seem to be intended to make it clear that the great excitement of the people is an involuntary result of Jesus' work. The evangelist seems to wish to tell his readers that Jesus was indeed popular among the people because of his teaching, healings, and exorcisms, but that he had never aimed at impressing them. In other words, Mark's Jesus has no ambition to mobilize a group of followers, let alone to cause social unrest or set people against the public authorities.

It has been noted above that Mark does not carry through the motif of the secrecy of Jesus' identity consistently. As soon as the focus of Mark's story moves away from the issue of Jesus' identity as the Christ, Mark neglects the secrecy motif. A similar observation can be made with regard to the motif of Jesus' commands to keep silent about his miraculous healings.

Not all Jesus' miraculous healings in Mark's Gospel are followed by a command to the cured to keep silent about what has happened.⁴⁵ After the exorcism in Mk 5:1-13, the man who was possessed by demons is even ordered by Jesus to go home and tell his relatives what Jesus has done for him (Mk 5:19). Also the story about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Mk 11:1-11) seems to be incompatible with the motif of Jesus' commands to keep silent about his miraculous deeds. The latter is meant to indicate that the great excitement of the people is an unintended result of Jesus' work. The excitement at his entry into Jerusalem (Mk 11:8-10), however, seems to be the result of Jesus' deliberate decision to enter into the city in the way that, according to the prophet Zechariah, a future, ideal king would enter into Sion (Zech 9:9).

Most of these inconsistencies are probably due to the fact that the motif of Jesus' attempts to avoid the overexcited reaction of the crowd is not the only recurring motif in Mark's Gospel. In writing his Gospel Mark included several motifs serving different aims. In some pericopes the evangelist apparently considered another motif more important than that of Jesus' commands to keep silent about his mi-

⁴⁵ A command to silence is lacking after the miraculous healings recorded in Mk 1:23-28, 29-31; 2:1-12; 3:1-6; 5:25-34; 7:24-30; 9:14-27; 10:46-52.

raculous healings. This seems to be the case, for instance, in Mk 2:1-12 and Mk 3:1-6. In these stories the dominant theme is the opposition of the Jewish leaders to Jesus. It is essential to these stories that Jesus' healings take place in public. A prohibition to tell anyone about the healings Jesus performs would be out of place. A similar observation can be made concerning the story of Jesus' encounter with the demoniac in Mk 5:1-20 and, more specifically, Jesus' ordering the man to tell his relatives about the exorcism (Mk 5:19). In this story Jesus is thought to be in a hostile environment where he is an unwelcome visitor (cf. Mk 5:14-17). This setting gives Mark the opportunity to allude to the theme of the Christians' task to propagate the Gospel.⁴⁶ Accordingly, the motif of Jesus trying to restrain the enthusiasm of the people would be of no use here.

Similarly, the discrepancy between Jesus' attempts to avoid an overexcited reaction of the people (Mk 1:44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26) and his decision to enter Jerusalem in a way that invites people to hail him as a future, ideal king (Mk 11:1-11) is probably the result of the evangelist's conflicting interests. The motif of Jesus' commands to keep silent about his miraculous healings is connected with an other motif in Mark's Gospel, i.e. that of the growing enthusiasm of the crowd who follow Jesus everywhere.⁴⁷ The latter motif is meant to focus the attention of the reader on Jesus' exceptional powers, and thus on the issue of his identity.⁴⁸ It could, however, easily lead Mark's reader to conclude that Jesus was a troublemaker who caused unrest among the people. To avoid such an interpretation of Jesus' intentions, Mark introduced the motif of the prohibitions on speaking about Jesus' miraculous healings (Mk 1:44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26).

In Mk 11:1-11 the motif of the enthusiasm of the crowd has long been abandoned, and Jesus' identity is no longer the central issue.⁴⁹ As a result, the evangelist seems to have forgotten about the motif of Jesus' attempts to avoid the excitement of the crowd as well. Instead, in Mk 11:1-11 Mark is concerned with presenting Jesus as the one with whom God's reign on earth has dawned. Thus Mark presents

⁴⁶ Cf. Mk 2:17; 4:1-25; 6:6-13; 13:10; 14:9.

⁴⁷ For the motif of the enthusiasm of the crowds and their large numbers, see, e.g., Mk 1:28, 32-34, 45; 2:2; 3:7-9; 4:1-2; 5:21; 6:31, 33, 53-56; 9:15. The connection of the two motifs is very clear in Mk 1:45.

⁴⁸ See also Chapter 4, p. 151.

⁴⁹ See also above, pp. 180-181.

Jesus as entering Jerusalem in the way the prophet Zechariah had announced that a future, ideal king would do, i.e. 'riding on a donkey' (Zech 9:9), and creates a setting in accordance with the event: Jesus, the Christ, is welcomed into the city with royal homage. Mark's concern to present Jesus as trying to avoid the great excitement of the people has now made way for his interest in presenting Jesus as the inaugurator of God's kingdom.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, it may be said that Jesus' commands to silence in Mark's Gospel can be distinguished into two types, each with its own function within the Gospel. On the one hand, Jesus' commands in Mk 1:25, 1:34, 3:12, 8:30, and 9:9 are all prohibitions against revealing that he is the Christ, the Son of God. These are included by Mark to present Jesus as actively trying to prevent a political interpretation of his messiahship from arising among the people until it is proven undeniably to be wrong, that is, until after his death and resurrection. On the other hand, Jesus' commands in Mk 1:44, 5:43, 7:36, and 8:26 constitute the motif of Jesus' ban on speaking about his miraculous healings. This motif portrays him as averse to using his miracles as a means to impress the crowd. Thus the great excitement of the people, as depicted in Mark's Gospel, is presented by the evangelist as an unintended result of Jesus' healings.

As has been observed above, neither of these motifs is carried through consistently. The motif of the secrecy of Jesus' identity is neglected by the evangelist from the story of Bartimaeus onwards, when the issue of Jesus' identity is no longer Mark's main concern. The motif of Jesus' commands to keep silent about his miraculous healings, which was meant to indicate that Jesus never aimed at impressing the crowds, seems to be definitively forgotten in Mark's story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Despite their limited scope the two motifs form an important contribution to Mark's depiction of Jesus' ministry. Jesus' injunctions to silence as occurring in Mark's Gospel form a literary device that is used by the evangelist to articulate his view that Jesus had no ambition to assume political power: Mark's Jesus has no intentions to make the people believe that he

will re-establish a free and independent Israel, nor does he have any ambition to mobilize the masses in preparation for a revolt.

CHAPTER SIX

JESUS' DEATH IN MARK'S GOSPEL

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters have shown that in his Gospel Mark intends to make clear to his readers that Jesus, although rightly called 'Christ,' never had any political ambitions. This Markan message seems to be an attempt to forestall the criticism the Christian use of the title 'Christ' for Jesus might elicit, i.e. that the Christians were the followers of someone who had been an anti-Roman rebel. Accordingly, my assumption that the reason for the persecution of the Markan Christians lay in their alleged subversiveness¹ seems to be borne out by the thrust of Mark's Gospel.

It was argued above that another possible reason that the Christian community might be regarded as a subversive Jewish movement was the tradition concerning Jesus' crucifixion.² Crucifixion was a punishment applied primarily to non-Roman inhabitants of the Roman Empire who were tried for serious offences such as banditry or social insubordination.³ The tradition concerning Jesus' crucifixion, then, might lead people to consider the Christians the followers of a revolutionary. Therefore, if we are right in supposing that the Jewish leaders persecuted the Markan Christian community because they feared that the Romans would regard and treat it as a rebellious movement, Jesus' crucifixion was another issue Mark had to deal with in his Gospel.

I intend to argue presently that the evangelist does indeed try to allay the suspicion that might rise against the Christians in consequence of their remaining faithful to someone who had been cruci-

¹ See Part One, Evaluation of the Results, pp. 139-142.

² See Part One, Evaluation of the Results, pp. 141-142.

³ See Part One, Evaluation of the Results, p. 141, and note 4.

fied. First, I will examine Jesus' encounters with his opponents, the leading Jews, which eventually lead to his arrest and execution. I will show that Mark presents Jesus' crucifixion as the result not of any subversive behaviour or ideas on his part, but of the ill will of the Jewish leaders. Subsequently, I will discuss Mark's portrayal of Jesus in Mk 14-15. I argue that in these chapters Mark intends to convey the message that Jesus, although arrested, tried, and executed as an insurrectionist, was in fact a righteous man, who accepted suffering and even death as a consequence of his faithfulness to God.

1. THE REASON FOR JESUS' CRUCIFIXION IN MARK'S GOSPEL

It is generally agreed that Mark shows a remarkable interest in Jesus' arrest, trial, and execution. Mark has Jesus predict these events no less than three times (Mk 8:31; 9:30-31; 10:32-34), and describes them in great detail in the final part of his Gospel (Mk 14-15). In these final chapters Mark relates how Jesus is arrested by order of the chief priests, scribes, and elders (Mk 14:43-52), questioned before the Jewish Sanhedrin (Mk 14:53-65), and subsequently handed over to the Roman prefect Pilate, who has him crucified (Mk 15:1-15).

It should be noted that the Jewish leaders play a crucial role in Jesus' execution. What interests us now is why, according to Mark, the leading Jews ordered Jesus to be arrested and delivered him up to the Romans. Therefore I will analyse Mark's depiction of the events which led to Jesus' execution, concentrating on the motive of the Jewish leaders for having Jesus put to death, and the charge they bring against Jesus openly in Mk 15:1-15.

Already during his ministry in Galilee, Mark's Jesus meets with serious opposition on the part of the local scribes and Pharisees. In Mk 3:6 the evangelist tells his readers that after the healing of a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, the Pharisees conspire with the Herodians⁴ against Jesus and decide 'that they will kill him.'⁵ Why do the Galilean Pharisees in Mk 3:6 wish to kill Jesus?

⁴ The word Ἡρῳδῖαινοί is not found outside Mark and Markan tradition in other authors; it occurs in Mk 3:6, Mk 12:13 and its parallel Mt 22:16, and in Mk 8:15 v.l. There is no group or organization known to us to which it could refer. Probably it designates the political supporters of Herod Antipas. In any case, Mark's intention in Mk 3:6 is clear: the Pharisees seek the help

In the lead-up to Mk 3:6, the evangelist relates a number of incidents in which Pharisees or scribes, that is, Jewish religious and political leaders, play a part. The first of these incidents is the healing of a paralytic in Mk 2:1-12. In this story Mark has Jesus say to the paralytic: 'Your sins are forgiven' (v. 5). The scribes who witness the incident consider Jesus' words blasphemous, since in their view only God has the authority to forgive sins (vv. 6-7). In reply, Jesus claims that, as God's special envoy, he has that same authority and power; subsequently he sustains this claim by healing the paralytic (vv. 10-12).

The story of the healing of the paralytic is followed by three discussions of Jesus with the Pharisees, all three about religious topics. In Mk 2:15-17 the evangelist relates how some Pharisaic scribes question Jesus' disciples about the fact that Jesus 'eats with tax collectors and sinners.' In the next pericope, Mk 2:18-22, the Pharisees, together with the disciples of John the Baptist, ask Jesus why his disciples do not fast. Finally, in Mk 2:23-28 the Pharisees interrogate Jesus about his disciples' violation of the Jewish law on Sabbath rest. In answering all these questions Jesus stands firm and does not give an inch.

Thus far, the confrontations between Jesus and the Pharisees are

of those who support the local government, or of those who have connections with the local government, in order to have Jesus killed. See also R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (HTKNT 2) I, Freiburg/Basel/Wien, 1976, p. 195; D. Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (HNT 3), Tübingen, 1987, p. 67; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (WBC 34a), Dallas, 1989, pp. 138-139; R.H. Gundry, *Mark. A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, Grand Rapids, 1993, p. 152.

⁵ The phrase συμβούλιον ἐδίδουν ... ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν is often translated as 'they conspired ... how to destroy him' (see, e.g., NRSV; R.A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, pp. 131 and 139; M.D. Hooker, *A Commentary to the Gospel according to St. Mark* (BNTC), London, 1991, pp. 105 and 108). This translation is probably inspired by Mk 11:18 and 14:1, where it is said that Jesus' opponents consider how (πῶς) to kill him. The phrase συμβούλιον ἐδίδουν ... ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν in Mk 3:6 is, however, better translated as 'they decided ... that they would kill him.' In Greek literature of the New Testament period, the conjunction ὅπως + subjunctive is used to introduce either a final clause or an object clause following a verb of, for instance, striving, beseeching, or commanding (see A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, Nashville, 1934, pp. 985-987 and 994-995). The words ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν in Mk 3:6 are then best explained as an object clause expressing the content of the decision taken by the Pharisees and Herodians; compare Mt 12:14 and 22:15. See also Bauer, s.v. ὅπως 2b; cf. D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 66 ('fassten ... den Beschluss gegen ihn, ihn zu vernichten'); J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (EKK 2) I, Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1978, p. 125 ('fassten ... einen Beschluss gegen ihn, dass sie ihn vernichten würden').

confined to discussions about his authority, which is contested by the Pharisees (Mk 2:6-7), or disagreements over religious topics, such as the Jewish customs regarding purity (Mk 2:16), fasting (Mk 2:18), and Sabbath rest (Mk 2:24). Obviously the Pharisees consider Jesus' behaviour and views a reason to bring charges against him, for in the following pericope, Mk 3:1-6, Mark says that when a man with a withered hand appeared before Jesus, the Pharisees 'watched Jesus to see whether he would cure him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him' (v. 2). Subsequently, when they see Jesus healing the man and thus breaking the Sabbath rest, the Pharisees apparently have enough evidence to bring a charge against Jesus, for they walk off to arrange his death (v. 6).

In short, Mark has the Pharisees in Galilee decide to kill Jesus on no other charge than that of blasphemy (Mk 2:7) and violation of Jewish religious laws (Mk 2:16, 18, 24). In fact, the arguments about Jesus' authority to forgive sins and about the validity of the Jewish religious laws are the only confrontations between Jesus and the Pharisees prior to their decision in Mk 3:6 to have Jesus put to death.

After Mk 3:6 Jesus' authority and his attitude towards Jewish religious practices are the issue of renewed disputes between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees 'who came down from Jerusalem' (Mk 3:22 and 7:1). In Mk 3:22 scribes from Jerusalem contest the view that Jesus' authority derives from God, and maintain that his ability to cast out demons proves that he is possessed by Beelzebul. In Mk 7:1-5 Pharisees and scribes who have come from Jerusalem are said to argue with Jesus about the fact that his disciples do not observe the Jewish religious regulations on purity. In Mk 8:11 Pharisees are said to come to Jesus and 'argue with him, asking him for a sign from heaven, to test him.' And as soon as Jesus arrives in Judea (Mk 10:1), Pharisees put Jesus to the test by presenting him with the question whether or not a man may divorce his wife (Mk 10:2). It is not until Jesus has entered Jerusalem that his opponents start planning his death again. In Mk 11:18 the evangelist says that after Jesus' cleansing of the temple (Mk 11:15-17), the chief priests and scribes were considering how they could destroy him (v. 18a). Why is it that they want Jesus' death?

In the preceding verses, Mk 11:15-16, Mark relates how Jesus 'entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling

and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.' In other words, Jesus obstructs the temple cult by destroying and disturbing everything that is necessary for it to go on. In Mk 11:17 he justifies his action by saying that the Jewish cult practice has made the Jerusalem temple 'a den of robbers.' These words of Jesus cause the chief priests and scribes to look for a way to eliminate Jesus; this is clear from the opening words of Mk 11:18: 'The chief priests and the scribes *heard* this (ἤκουσαν), so they began to look for some way to kill Jesus' (v. 18a).

According to Mk 11:18a, then, the chief priests and scribes wanted to eliminate Jesus on hearing his judgement on the temple cult (v. 17). This is further explained in v. 18b-c: the chief priests and scribes wanted to kill Jesus 'because they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spell-bound by his teaching' (v. 18b-c). Apparently, what leads to their decision to kill him is not just the insulting character of Jesus' remark on the temple, but rather the effect it would have on the crowd. The chief priests and scribes want to get rid of Jesus because he induces the masses to think unfavourably about the Jewish cult and religious practice. If the crowd accept Jesus' judgement on the temple—as they are likely to do since they have been 'spell-bound by his teaching' ever since he started his ministry—this will endanger the respectability of the Jerusalem temple cult and other religious practices, and thus the authority of the chief priests and scribes. Evidently they have good reason to fear Jesus and to put him out of the way.⁶

The reason why the leading Jews look for a way to kill Jesus in Mk 11:18, then, is their wish to safeguard their position and authority

⁶ The most natural interpretation of Mk 11:18 is to take the first γάρ clause (v. 18b) as an explanation of v. 18a, and the second γάρ clause (v. 18c) as an explanation of the first (v. 18b). (See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 199; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 645; cf. M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, p. 260.) Some scholars interpret Mk 11:18 differently; they hold that in this verse the chief priests and scribes are restrained from killing Jesus by their fear of the crowd, who are on Jesus' side. Nothing in v. 18, however, indicates that the leading Jews were restrained from their plan to put Jesus to death. (Against D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 193-194; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 130.)

over the people in religious matters. A similar motive for their wish to kill Jesus is alluded to in Mk 12:12.

In Mk 12:1-11 Mark has Jesus tell the parable of the vineyard and the wicked tenants. It has already been argued elsewhere in this study that this parable about a man who plants a vineyard, leases it to tenants, and sends slaves to collect his share of the produce, is in fact an allegory about God entrusting the leadership over his people to the Jewish leaders and sending prophets to remind them of their accountability to God.⁷ The parable's message is that the prophets God sent were all killed by the Jewish leaders, as was his final envoy, his beloved son, Jesus. However, God will intervene and take the leadership over Israel away from the Jewish leaders and give it to others, namely the Romans (Mk 12:9), and in doing so he will vindicate his murdered son, Jesus.

In Mk 12:12-13 the evangelist describes the reaction of the chief priests, scribes, and elders to this message: on hearing Jesus they 'wanted⁸ to arrest him and feared the crowd, for they understood that he had told the parable against them, and they left him and went away. And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and Herodians to trap him in what he said' (Mk 12:12-13). According to Mk 12:12-13, then, the parable of Mk 12:1-11 elicits two reactions from the leading Jews, first their wish to arrest Jesus (καὶ ἐξήτουν αὐτὸν κρατῆσαι, v. 12a), secondly their fear of the crowd (καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν τὸν ὄχλον, v. 12b). The phrase 'for they understood that he had told the parable against them' in v. 12c (ἔγνωσαν ... εἶπεν) makes it clear that both reactions are caused by the fact that the leading Jews realize that in the parable Jesus accuses them of bad leadership over Israel and disobedience to God, and predicts their downfall. Apparently the Jewish leaders in Mk 12:12 fear that Jesus' parable, which undermines their authority, will cause the crowd to turn against them and drive them from their leading positions. What is of interest now is that the wish of the Jewish leaders in Mk 12:12 to arrest Jesus is their direct reaction to his attack on their authority and position.⁹

⁷ See Chapter 2, p. 83.

⁸ Other instances of ζητέω + infinitive meaning 'to wish to' are found in, e.g., Mt 12:46; Lk 5:18; 9:9; 17:33; Jn 5:18; 7:1; Acts 16:10. See also Bauer, s.v. ζητέω 2.b.γ.

⁹ Some scholars have interpreted Mk 12:12 differently. They maintain that according to Mk 12:12 the Jewish leaders wish to arrest Jesus because they perceive that he has told the parable against them, but do not make the arrest on the spot from fear of the reaction of the crowd.

They do not seize Jesus themselves. Instead they walk off (v. 12d) and send some Pharisees and Herodians to 'trap him in what he said' (v. 13). Apparently the leading Jews, who wish to seize Jesus because of his criticism of them (Mk 12:12; cf. 11:18), do not yet have sufficient evidence to do so. Therefore they try to elicit a statement from Jesus on the basis of which they can bring a charge against him and have him put to death. The Pharisees and Herodians who are sent ask Jesus whether it is right to pay taxes to the Roman emperor (Mk 12:14), hoping to catch him out pronouncing subversive ideas.¹⁰ Jesus, however, who knows that they are putting him to the test, gives an answer that does not give them any grounds to accuse and arrest him (v. 17).

The above discussion of Mk 3:6, 11:18, and 12:12 enables us to give an answer to the question of what, according to Mark, was the true motive of the Jewish leaders to have Jesus killed. The scribes and Pharisees in Galilee decide to kill Jesus from annoyance about his—in their view blasphemous—claims (Mk 2:7) and violation of the Jewish religious laws (Mk 2:16, 18, 24). The chief priests, scribes, and elders in Jerusalem decide to eliminate Jesus because he induces

(See, e.g., R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 223; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 148; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 232; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 664; S.G.F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots. A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity*, Manchester, 1967, p. 271.) At least two arguments speak against this interpretation. First, the interpretation is based on the supposition that there is an ellipsis after κρατῆσαι in v. 12a for which one might supply something like '(but) they did not arrest him because (they feared the crowd).' Secondly, if this interpretation is accepted, the order in which the information is given to the reader of the Greek text is illogical. In that case, v. 12a mentions the wish of the leading Jews to arrest Jesus, v. 12b the reason why they do not arrest him, v. 12c the reason why they wanted to arrest him, and v. 12d the information that they do not arrest him, but leave him alone. This order is most awkward; understandably, some translations have changed the order of verse 12 into c-a-b-d, in order to remove this oddness (e.g., NRSV). However, the interpretation I have proposed does not require the supposition of an ellipsis. Nor is the order of the verse a problem; it can be left as it is. The thought that the Jewish leaders' fear of the crowd in v. 12b is meant to explain why they do not arrest Jesus on the spot is probably due to the interpreters' tendency to clarify the discrepancy between the wish of the Jewish leaders to arrest Jesus in v. 12a and what they do in fact do according to v. 12d, i.e. 'leave Jesus and walk away.' But if one continues with vv. 13-14, it is clear that the leading Jews have another reason for not arresting Jesus straight away. The fact that they plan to 'trap Jesus in what he said' (v. 13) reveals that they do not arrest him because as yet they do not have sufficient evidence for their charge against him.

¹⁰ See also, e.g., D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 201; S.G.F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, p. 271; cf. R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 693; M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, pp. 279-280.

the crowd to think disparagingly about the Jerusalem temple cult and Jewish religious practices (Mk 11:18), and portrays the Jewish leaders as wicked usurpers who will be punished by God for their disobedience (Mk 12:1-11). In the eyes of the leading Jews, Jesus undermines their authority over the crowd (Mk 11:18; 12:12). What makes them decide to kill him (Mk 11:18; 12:12) is the fact that Jesus' teaching threatens their position. This motive for killing Jesus, however, does not provide them with a valid charge to condemn him to death. Therefore, they look for one by trying to trap Jesus into pronouncing suspect, subversive ideas. They do not succeed, however, in obtaining any evidence of this kind against him (Mk 12:13-17).

Leading Jews who plot Jesus' death appear again in Mk 14:1-2. Two days before Passover, the chief priests and scribes are 'looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; for they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people"' (Mk 14:1-2). In other words, the chief priests and scribes fear that if they arrested Jesus at the festival, when more people would notice it than would normally be the case, this would cause unrest among the crowd gathered for the feast and favourably disposed to Jesus (Mk 14:2). Therefore, they look for a way to arrest and kill Jesus without the crowd noticing (ἐν δόλῳ, Mk 14:1).¹¹ Judas' offer to hand Jesus over to them is a welcome break (Mk 14:10-11).¹² The chief priests, scribes, and elders send a 'crowd with swords and clubs' with Judas to arrest

¹¹ It has been observed that the adjunct ἐν τῇ ἐορτῇ Mk 14:2 contradicts what Mark says later on about the Jewish leaders taking action against Jesus during the feast. (See, e.g., D.E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark* (PGC A 489), Harmondsworth, 1963, p. 370). It is, however, likely that ἐν τῇ ἐορτῇ is to be taken not only as an adjunct of time, but also as an adjunct of place, that is, meaning 'in the festival assembly.' (See, e.g., R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 321; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 232; M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, p. 326; R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 808.) Mk 14:2 is an explanation of the statement that the leading Jews are looking for a way to arrest Jesus *by stealth* (ἐν δόλῳ, v. 1). Arresting him openly, in the presence of the festival crowd, would certainly cause unrest among the people. Therefore, instead of taking the easy way of seizing Jesus during the feast, when he is speaking publicly, the Jewish leaders want to take him captive in a more complicated way, without the crowd of his supporters being present.

¹² Cf. D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 231 and 233; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 229; H.C. Kee, *Community of the New Age. Studies in Mark's Gospel*, Philadelphia, 1977, p. 96: 'Judas does not betray Jesus' messianic claim, but his location, so that he could be seized by stealth (14.2, 10, 44, 48f.).'

Jesus while he is alone with his disciples in Gethsemane (Mk 14:43, 48). Jesus does not offer any resistance, and is arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin (Mk 14:53).

The leading Jews have now managed to arrest Jesus without causing unrest among the crowd, but have still no valid charge on which they can condemn Jesus to death. Therefore they gather and 'look for testimony against Jesus to put him to death' (Mk 14:55). At first, they are not very successful. Many people are willing to give false testimony against Jesus. These testimonies, however, are of no use, since none is supported by the requisite two witnesses (Mk 14:56-59).

Then the high priest starts interrogating Jesus, asking him if he is 'the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One' (Mk 14:61). Jesus' affirmative answer to this question (Mk 14:62) finally brings the trial to a conclusion. Jesus' admission that he is the Christ, the Son of God, is taken by the Sanhedrin as convincing evidence that Jesus holds blasphemous ideas. Mark probably means to say that the Sanhedrin construed Jesus' words as blasphemous although these words were not at all blasphemous in the religious or legal terms of the time.¹³ Nevertheless, for the members of the Sanhedrin Jesus' words are reason enough to have him put to death (Mk 14:63-64). Moreover, Jesus' avowal that he is the Christ provides the leading Jews with a charge on which Jesus can be put to death by the Roman authorities. For if 'Christ' is interpreted as designating a royal pretender, Jesus' words can easily become the grounds for a charge of subversiveness.

The reader of Mark's Gospel knows already from Mk 8:27-13:37 that according to the evangelist Jesus' claim to be the Christ did not imply any political aspirations. According to Mark, Jesus had no intentions to assume power over an earthly Israel. His ministry as the Christ rather implied his death, resurrection, and parousia at the definitive breakthrough of God's kingdom.¹⁴ Therefore, although valid grounds for an initial charge, Jesus' confession in Mk 14:61-62 is in itself no proof of his subversiveness. Nevertheless, the Jewish leaders in Mk 15 manage to manipulate Jesus' interrogation by the Roman prefect Pilate in such a way that it eventually leads to his crucifixion.

First of all, they distort Jesus' confession that he is the Christ into

¹³ See D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 250.

¹⁴ See Chapter 4, pp. 154-166.

a claim to the title of King of the Jews, thus accusing him of fostering political aspirations (Mk 15:2).¹⁵ When, in Mk 15:2, Jesus dissociates himself from such a claim,¹⁶ the chief priests are said to accuse him still more strongly (Mk 15:3).¹⁷

Pilate, who seems to be convinced of Jesus' innocence, tries to find a way to release him. First he invites Jesus urgently to defend himself against the accusations brought up by his opponents (Mk 15:4). When Jesus does not reply, he seeks another solution. According to Mk 15:6, Pilate customarily released a prisoner at the festival, whomever the people might ask for. So, when the crowd approach and ask him to act in accordance with this custom, Pilate offers to release Jesus (Mk 15:8-9). The chief priests, however, manage to avert Jesus' release by stirring up the crowd. The people reject Pilate's offer and beg him to release instead the insurrectionist Barabbas (Mk 15:11). Again, as in Mk 15:3, it is the intervention of the leading Jews that prevents Pilate from releasing Jesus.

Throughout the story, Pilate remains convinced that Jesus is not guilty of subversiveness, even though the Jewish leaders attempt to make him believe the opposite. In Mk 15:10 the evangelist remarks that Pilate offers to release Jesus because 'he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him [i.e. Jesus] over.' When, in Mk 15:13, the people start to demand Jesus' crucifixion, Pilate asks them 'Why, what has he done?' (Mk 15:14), clearly indicating that he does not see any reason why Jesus should be crucified. When Pilate finally gives in and hands Jesus over to be crucified, he is said to do so not because he found Jesus guilty of subversion, but only because he wanted 'to satisfy the crowd' (Mk 15:15).

In short, Jesus' treatment by the Roman prefect Pilate was, according to Mark, manipulated by the Jewish leaders who wanted to make sure that Jesus would be executed.¹⁸ The evangelist shows his

¹⁵ On the difference between the question of the high priest in Mk 14:61 and that of Pilate in Mk 15:2, see Chapter 4, pp. 166-168. See also R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, p. 924; V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark. The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes*, London, 1966, p. 579.

¹⁶ On the difference between Jesus' answer in Mk 15:2 and that in Mk 14:62, see Chapter 4, pp. 166-168.

¹⁷ For this interpretation of Mk 15:3, see Chapter 4, p. 168, note 74.

¹⁸ See S.G.F. Brandon, 'The Apologetical Factor in the Markan Gospel,' in F.L. Cross (ed.), *Studia Evangelica* II, Berlin, 1964, pp. 34-46, esp. pp. 39-40; idem, *Jesus and the Zealots*, pp. 258-262; cf. R.H. Gundry, *Mark*, pp. 927-928; M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, pp. 366-367.

readers that Jesus' crucifixion was the result not of his anti-Roman, subversive behaviour or ideas, but of the ill will of the Jewish leaders (φθόνος, Mk 15:10). The Roman prefect responsible for Jesus' execution never believed he was guilty.¹⁹ It should be noted here that Pilate's assumption that the leading Jews accused Jesus of subversiveness out of jealousy corresponds with what we have found to be their true reason for planning his death in Mk 11:18 and 12:12. The analyses of these verses made clear that they wanted to kill Jesus because his teaching undermined their authority and was a serious threat to their position. They did not recognize Jesus' authority as the Son of God; consequently they refused to give up their authority for his benefit. In other words, their plan to kill Jesus was the result of their resentment against him, caused by the fact that he endangered the authority they felt they were entitled to.

2. MARK'S DEPICTION OF JESUS AS A SUFFERING RIGHTEOUS ONE

Throughout Mark's account of Jesus' arrest, trial, and execution in Mk 14-15, Jesus is treated by his opponents as an insurrectionist. He is arrested as a bandit by a crowd 'with swords and clubs' (Mk 14:43, 48), and brought before Pilate on the charge of being an anti-Roman rebel (Mk 15:2).²⁰ Pilate presents him to the people together with someone called Barabbas, who, according to Mark, was arrested 'with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection' (Mk 15:7).²¹ Although in Mark's view Jesus is innocent while Barabbas presumably is not, the latter is released whereas Jesus is crucified as a rebel together with 'two insurrectionists' (Mk 15:27). At his cross an inscription is put up indicating that he was sentenced as a royal pretender (Mk 15:26). In other words, the authorities in Mk

¹⁹ It should be noted that a similar motif plays a part in Mark's story of the death of John the Baptist in Mk 6:17-29. In that story Herod has John the Baptist beheaded at the wish of Herod's wife Herodias, although he himself did not want to kill him. According to Josephus' *Antiquities*, Herod has John the Baptist arrested and killed because he fears that John's influence on the people will lead to sedition (*Ant.* XVIII 118). Historically, the reason for John's death given by Josephus is more plausible than that given by Mark; the evangelist's story seems rather apologetic. Mark felt the need to defend not only Jesus, but also Jesus' 'predecessor' against any possible suspicion of subversiveness.

²⁰ See Chapter 4, pp. 167-168.

²¹ It remains unclear which insurrection Mark is referring to here.

14-15 treat Jesus as an insurrectionist and have him crucified as such.

Jesus' behaviour in Mk 14-15, however, is not at all that of an insurrectionist; on the contrary, Jesus patiently and submissively bears everything his enemies do to him. In many respects Mark's depiction of Jesus in Mk 14-15 resembles that of the traditional image of a suffering righteous one as occurring in, for instance, a number of psalms in the Hebrew psalter. Moreover, several events and phrases in Mk 14-15 are reminiscent of—or even explicitly refer to—the fate of a righteous one as depicted in writings in the Hebrew Scriptures and Hellenistic Jewish literature.²² This will presently be illustrated.

Just before his arrest in Gethsemane, Mark's Jesus is deeply grieved and, as a pious person would, turns to God in prayer asking to be delivered from peril (Mk 14:34-36).²³ His piety is illustrated by the fact that in his prayer he does not oppose God's plan, but trusts to God and totally submits to God's will (Mk 14:36). While Jesus is praying, his followers begin to desert him. Although Jesus asks the three disciples accompanying him to stay awake while he is praying, they fall asleep (Mk 14:32-41). When Jesus is subsequently arrested, they do not seem to make a real effort to come to his rescue. The only resistance offered is the action of one of the bystanders who cuts off the ear of the high priest's slave (Mk 14:47). All Jesus' followers are said to run away leaving him behind (Mk 14:50-52). The climax of Jesus' abandonment is Peter's denial in Mk 14:66-72, which was already predicted by Jesus in Mk 14:27-31. By the time Jesus is finally interrogated by Pilate and crucified, he has been abandoned by even his closest friends.

The abandonment Mark's Jesus experiences in Mk 14-15 is a lit-

²² See, e.g., G.W.E. Nickelsburg, art. 'Passion Narratives,' *ABD* V, pp. 172-177, esp. p. 173; R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, pp. 319-543 *passim*; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 227-271 *passim*; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, pp. 216-350 *passim*. For the tradition concerning the suffering righteous one in the Hebrew Scriptures and further Hellenistic Jewish literature, see K.T. Kleinknecht, *Der leidende Gerechtfertigte* (WUNT 13), Tübingen, 1984, pp. 23-153; L. Ruppert, 'Der leidende (bedrängte, getötete) Gerechte nach den Spätschriften des Alten Testaments (inklusive Septuaginta) und der (nichttrabbinischen) Literatur des Frühjudentums unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Gottesbildes,' in J.W. van Henten, et al. (edd.), *Die Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie* (SPB 38), Leiden, 1989, pp. 76-87.

²³ Cf. R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 389; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 259; D.E. Nineham, *St. Mark*, p. 390.

erary motif that reminds us of the tradition concerning the suffering righteous man in the Hebrew Scriptures and Hellenistic Jewish literature. It is found in, for instance, Ps 22:12, 31:12b-13, 38:12, and Sir 51:7. Here it is said that the righteous man is abandoned by his friends and relatives, who do not assist him in his distress, or who watch his misery without being moved to sympathy or pity. Something similar happens to Jesus in Mk 14-15.²⁴

Another motif in Mk 14-15 that goes back to the tradition concerning the suffering righteous man is that of the false witnesses in Mk 14:56-59. In the absence of a valid charge against Jesus, the Sanhedrin in Mk 14:55 is said to look for testimony against him in order to have grounds for condemning him to death. Subsequently many people are said to give false testimony against Jesus, accusing him of, among other things, having claimed that he would destroy the temple and rebuild a new one (Mk 14:56-58). These accusations label Jesus as a dangerous adventurer and revolutionary charismatic who posed a threat to public order. Mark explicitly says that these testimonies are false and contradictory (Mk 14:56, 57, 59). The occurrence of false witnesses in Mk 14:56-59 reminds us of the Hebrew and Jewish tradition by which a righteous one is said to suffer because of false accusations. In Ps 27:12 and 35:11, for instance, the righteous man complains that 'false witnesses have risen' against him (Ps 27:12).²⁵ Thus, by mentioning false witnesses in Mk 14:56-59, Mark depicts Jesus' fate as that of a suffering righteous one.²⁶

Mark's Jesus does not defend himself against the false accusations brought forward against him in Mk 14:56-59. When in Mk 14:60 the high priest asks Jesus 'Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?,' Jesus is silent and does not answer (Mk 14:61). Also during his trial before Pilate in Mk 15:1-15, Mark's Jesus does not defend himself against the accusations of the chief priests. When in Mk 15:3 'the chief priests firmly accuse him,' Pilate offers Jesus the opportunity to respond (Mk 15:4), but Jesus 'made no further reply' (Mk 15:5).

²⁴ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 402; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 271.

²⁵ See also Ps 38:12; 109:2; Sir 51:2, 5-6.

²⁶ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, pp. 431-432; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 249; D.E. Nineham, *St. Mark*, p. 406.

Jesus' silence in the face of his accusers is again reminiscent of the image of the suffering righteous one as occurring in some writings of the Hebrew Scriptures. With regard to this suffering righteous one, it is repeatedly said that he does not defend himself against the harmful actions of his enemies, but endures silently everything they do to him. In Ps 38:12-14, for instance, the righteous man complains that his enemies 'lay their snares' and 'meditate treachery all day long' (v. 12), but adds that he himself, 'like the deaf,' does not hear and, 'like the mute' (v. 13), does not speak, and that he is 'like the one who does not hear and in whose mouth is no retort' (v. 14). In Isa 53:7 the author says that although the righteous one was oppressed and afflicted, 'yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.' In other words, the fact that Mark's Jesus remains silent and does not defend himself against the false accusations brought forward against him is in accordance with the traditional image of the righteous one as depicted in some writings of the Hebrew Scriptures.²⁷

Another clear reference to the character of the suffering righteous one occurs in the account of the maltreatment and mocking of Jesus in Mk 14:65, 15:16-20, and 15:29-32. In Mk 14:65 it is said that after the Sanhedrin decided to have Jesus killed 'some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophesy!"' In Mk 15:16-20 the evangelist relates that once Pilate has finally handed Jesus over to be crucified, the soldiers 'called together the whole cohort' (v. 16), dressed Jesus up like a king (v. 17), and mocked him by saluting him as such (v. 18). They also 'struck him with a reed and spat upon him' (v. 19). Finally, in Mk 15:29-32 it is said that while Jesus was hanging on the cross 'those who passed by derided him shaking their heads,' and mocked him by defying him to save himself and 'come down from the cross' (vv. 29-30). Also the chief priests and scribes, as well as those crucified with Jesus, are said to join in mocking him (vv. 31-32).

These three passages on the maltreatment and mocking of Jesus by his adversaries again reflect the language and images used for typifying the suffering righteous one in Israel's Scriptures and Jewish

²⁷ See also D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, pp. 249 and 255; cf. M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, p. 360.

literature. As to the maltreatment of Jesus, Isa 50:6 is of relevance, where it is said that the righteous one willingly let people strike him, pull out his beard, insult him, and spit upon him.²⁸ The mocking of Jesus reflects a tradition also represented, for instance, in Ps 22:6-8. In that passage the righteous man says that he is 'scorned by others, and despised by the people' (v. 6), and that they mock him, 'make mouth' at him and 'shake their heads' (v. 7), ridiculing his trust in God (v. 8). This closely corresponds with what is said in Mk 15:29-32.²⁹ The mention of the maltreatment and mocking of Jesus in Mk 14-15, then, characterizes him as a typical example of a suffering righteous one.³⁰

Mark's story about Jesus' crucifixion in Mk 15 contains further evidence that Mark wants to represent Jesus as a typical suffering righteous one in the two clear reminiscences of Ps 22. The first reminiscence of Ps 22 is the evangelist's remark in Mk 15:24 that those who crucified Jesus 'divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.' Precisely this is said of the righteous man in Ps 22:19: 'they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.'³¹ The second reference to Ps 22 is found in Mk 15:34. Just before Jesus dies, the evangelist has him cry out 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (v. 34), which is the opening verse of Ps 22. At the moment of his death, then, Mark has Jesus utter the words of the righteous man in Ps 22. Thus the evangelist uses some features of the righteous one of Ps 22 in order to represent Jesus clearly in this tradition of righteous suffering.³²

The reaction of those who witness Jesus' cry in Mk 15:34 reminds us of the way Hebrew and Jewish tradition depicts the reaction of the enemies of the righteous to their victims' fate. In Wis 2:17-18 it is said that the adversaries of the righteous one decide to maltreat him

²⁸ See also J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 284; cf. M.D. Hooker, *St. Mark*, pp. 363 and 370.

²⁹ See also Ps 109:25: 'I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they shake their heads.' Mocking as one of the sufferings the righteous man must bear is also mentioned, for instance, in Ps 31:12; 35:16; 42:11; 69:11-13, 20-21; 119:22; Isa 50:6; 53:3; Wis 2:19; cf. Wis 5:4.

³⁰ See also J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 284.

³¹ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 480; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 260; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, pp. 316-317.

³² Cf. R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, pp. 494-495; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 263; J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, pp. 321-322; D.E. Nineham, *St. Mark*, p. 428.

in order to 'test what will happen at the end of his life; for if the righteous man is God's child, he will help him, and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries' (Wis 2:17-18). In Mk 15:35-36 those who stand at the foot of Jesus' cross are said to do something similar. Jesus' cry leads some of the bystanders to mock that he is calling Elijah (Mk 15:35), and one of them gives Jesus vinegar to drink to revive his consciousness and prolong his life (Mk 15:36). The vinegar, incidentally, may in turn be reminiscent of Ps 69:22 where it is said that the righteous man is given vinegar to drink.³³ In Mk 15:36 the man tries to prolong Jesus' life in order to 'see whether Elijah will come to take him down' from the cross (Mk 15:36). In Mk 15:36, then, Jesus' enemies pretend to be curious to see whether God will rescue him, just like the enemies of the righteous man in Wis 2:17-18.³⁴

The evangelist makes it quite clear to his readers that although God does not rescue Jesus from death on the cross his violent death will not go unavenged. As soon as Jesus 'breathed his last' (Mk 15:37), 'the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom' (Mk 15:38). In Chapter 2 of the present study it has already been argued that the rending of the temple curtain points forward to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple as a whole, and that according to Mark the Roman victory over the Jews and the destruction of their temple in 70 AD were God's vengeance for their rejection of Jesus and their part in his execution.³⁵ According to the evangelist, then, God will vindicate Jesus and avenge his death, in accordance with Wis 4:20-5:23 where God is said to rehabilitate the righteous man and punish his enemies.

In connection with Mark's portrayal of Jesus as a righteous person who suffers because of his faithfulness to God, one further remark deserves to be made concerning Mark's use of the christological title 'Son of God.'

As Chapter 4 of the present study has shown, the evangelist regards Jesus as the Son of God, who is rightly called Christ and Son

³³ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 496; D. Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, p. 263; cf. J. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* II, p. 323.

³⁴ See also R. Pesch, *Markusevangelium* II, p. 497.

³⁵ See Chapter 2, pp. 92-94.

of David. It has also become clear that Mark intends to inculcate the idea that the titles 'Christ' and 'Son of David'—apt as they are—have no political connotations when applied to Jesus. In fact, every time the evangelist uses these titles to designate Jesus, he reminds his readers that Jesus was of royal dignity but free from political aspirations. Quite different is Mark's use of the title 'Son of God.' It seems that the evangelist considers this title to be the most fitting title for Jesus, as is clear from two observations.

First, in Mark's Gospel the title 'Son of God' is used twice by God himself, in Mk 1:11 and 9:7. The only two times God speaks in Mark's Gospel, he refers to Jesus as his 'beloved Son' (Mk 1:11; 9:7). Second, the title 'Son of God' occurs in the confession of the centurion at the cross in Mk 15:39. In the context of the Passion story, this confession is a climax. In the preceding paragraphs the evangelist relates how the fact that Jesus admitted that he was the Christ, the Son of God, in Mk 14:61-62 led to a misunderstanding about his identity, the distortion of his claim (Mk 15:2; cf. Mk 15:17-19, 26, 31-32), and eventually his execution. The centurion in Mk 15:39, who witnesses the rending of the temple curtain and interprets it as God's reaction to Jesus' violent death, finally perceives Jesus' true identity, namely, that he is the Son of God.

Mark's preference for the title 'Son of God' is best understood if one takes into account its traditio-historical background. First, it must be said that in a number of cases 'Son of God' is by and large synonymous with Christ. In the Hebrew Scriptures the king may be referred to as the Lord's Anointed (Christ), but also as a (or the) Son of God (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7 and 89:27-28). The title 'Son of God' occurs also in 4Q246, where it refers to a future king who will be authorized by God and reign forever.³⁶ Jesus, who is the Christ, can therefore be called Son of God, as he is, for instance, in Mk 14:61.

In some Hellenistic Jewish writings, however, the title 'Son of God' is also used to refer to a righteous person. In Sir 4:10, for in-

³⁶ The title 'Son of God' in 4Q246 II 1 almost certainly refers to a kingly figure. The evidence includes the striking agreements between the image of the Son of God in 4Q246 and that of the Davidic king in Ps Sal 17. Both are said to raise or assemble God's people (4Q246 II 4; Ps Sal 17:26); both are said to be righteous (4Q246 II 5; Ps Sal 17:26, 29, 36); in both cases it is said that this righteousness leads to peace (4Q246 II 6; Ps Sal 17:27-28, 33); about both it is said that all people will be subdued to them (4Q246 I 8-9; Ps Sal 17:30); both are authorized and supported by God (4Q246 II 7; Ps Sal 17:21, 32, 37).

stance, it is said that whoever lives a life of justice and compassion 'will be like a son of the Most High.' And in Wis 2 the righteous, who is maltreated by his adversaries, is called a 'Son of God' (Wis 2:18).³⁷ It has already been argued above that in Mk 14-15 the evangelist presents Jesus as a righteous person who is maltreated by his enemies. The use of the title 'Son of God' in Mk 15:39 is particularly apt, since the centurion's confession that Jesus is the Son of God is his reaction to the rending of the temple curtain, i.e. to the first stage of God's vindication of his suffering but faithful servant. This vindication is an essential element in the traditional image of the suffering righteous one.

In short, Mark's preference for the title 'Son of God' is understandable, since this title covers the whole of Jesus' identity as the evangelist wishes to present it in his Gospel. According to Mark, Jesus is both the Anointed (Christ) who inaugurates God's reign, and a suffering righteous one who has been humiliated and killed by his enemies, but rehabilitated by God. These two important aspects of Jesus' identity are aptly denoted by the title 'Son of God.' Unlike the titles 'Christ' and 'Son of David,' the title 'Son of God' is therefore used freely by Mark right from the beginning of his Gospel. Mark's use of this title is not affected by his effort in the second half of his Gospel to preclude the image of Jesus as a royal pretender.

CONCLUSIONS

In relation to Jesus' death, two motifs run through Mark's Gospel that are of relevance to my thesis. The first motif consists in the discrepancy between the true reason the Jewish leaders have for seeking Jesus' death and the charge they openly bring against him. The second motif lies in the contrast Mark creates between the way Jesus is treated by the authorities and Jesus' reaction to that treatment. Both motives serve to show Mark's readers that despite the fact that Jesus died by crucifixion he should not be considered an anti-Roman rebel.

In his Gospel Mark upholds the view that it was on the charge of subversiveness that the Jewish leaders delivered Jesus up to the Romans (Mk 15:2). The charge of subversiveness on which the leading

³⁷ See also, e.g., Wis 2:13; 5:5; Ps Sal 13:9; 17:27; 1 En 62:11.

Jews bring Jesus before the Roman prefect Pilate in Mk 15:2, however, is only a pretext concealing their true motive for having Jesus killed. Their true motive lies in their resentment against Jesus because of the fact that his teaching, which makes such a profound impression on the people, undermines their authority (Mk 3:6; 11:18; 12:12; 15:10). Pilate understands that Jesus is the victim of the ill will of the leading Jews (Mk 15:10), but is unable to prevent the fatal outcome. In short, Mark's message is that Jesus' crucifixion was not the outcome of any subversive behaviour or ideas on his part; rather it was the consequence of the ill will of the Jewish leaders.³⁸ The evangelist further illustrates his point with the aid of the traditional image of the suffering righteous one as occurring in writings of the Hebrew Scriptures and Hellenistic Jewish literature. Thus Mark shows his readers that although Jesus is treated by his opponents as an insurrectionist (Mk 14:43, 48, 58; 15:2, 26-27) he is, in fact, a righteous man who accepts suffering and even death as a consequence of his faithfulness to God.

The above observations concerning Mark's account of Jesus' trial and execution and the events leading up to it seem to warrant the conclusion that Mark intends to free Jesus from the suspicion of having been an insurrectionist that might arise as a consequence of the fact that he was crucified. This accords with the conclusions concerning Mark's intentions drawn in the two previous chapters, i.e. that Mark intends to show his readers that Jesus was not a royal pretender with aspirations to re-establish a free and independent Israel.

³⁸ See also S.G.F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, pp. 248-264; idem, 'Apologetical Factor,' pp. 36-40.

EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS

THE MESSAGE OF MARK'S GOSPEL AS A REACTION TO THE SITUATION OF THE MARKAN CHRISTIANS

The aim of the preceding chapters, chapters 4-6, was to show that Mark's Gospel contains evidence in support of the hypothesis that the reason for the persecution of the Markan Christians was believed by Mark to be the fact that they might be seen by the authorities as a threat to public order, because of their adherence to someone who was called Christ and had died by crucifixion.¹ This hypothesis now seems to have gained in plausibility, since the above analyses of Mark's portrayal of Jesus have made it clear that the evangelist is keen to play down the political connotations both of the title 'Christ' and of Jesus' crucifixion. The way he treats these connotations reveals that he intends to defend the Christians against the suspicion of subversiveness that could arise against them as a result of the fact that they confessed the crucified Jesus as Christ. Mark stresses that Jesus was not an anti-Roman rebel, and thus proclaims that there is no reason to consider the Christian community a subversive movement. Therefore, the situation in which Mark and his readers were living can now be characterized as follows.

The Markan Christian community lived in Galilee, shortly after the end of the Jewish revolt. Especially in this period, just after the revolt, the Romans must have been anxious to maintain strict public order. Any suspicion of social unrest could have caused them to intervene violently. The leading Jews in the area usually tried to prevent Roman intervention by arresting Jewish individuals or groups whose behaviour might arouse the suspicion of the Roman authorities; when the Jewish leaders considered it beyond their power to prevent or quell the unrest, they delivered the troublemakers up to the Romans. The leading Jews had good reason to expect the Romans to regard and treat the Markan Christian community as a subversive

¹ See Part One, Evaluation of the Results, pp. 139-142.

Jewish subgroup. Some of the Christians were of Jewish origin, but together with non-Jewish Christians they formed communities independent of the Jewish synagogues. Their claim to be the followers of someone whom they called Christ and who had died by crucifixion might indicate that they were the followers of an anti-Roman rebel. In order to avert Roman intervention, then, the Jewish leaders persecuted the Markan Christians and, when necessary, delivered them up to the Roman authorities.

This is the situation of the Markan community as it becomes perceptible from Mark's Gospel. Two further remarks need to be made.

First, strictly speaking it is uncertain whether, at the time Mark's Gospel was written, Christians were actually being persecuted, or were only expected by the evangelist to be persecuted. The most we can say is that the evangelist was of the opinion that such persecutions might afflict his readers. He may have thought so either because he knew that some members of his community had already been arrested, or because for some reason he expected the leading Jews to react to the Christians as they usually reacted to Jewish groups demonstrating rebellious features. In any case, in the eyes of the evangelist the threat must have been a serious one, since he deals with the issue extensively.²

Secondly, as was argued above, Mark's depiction of Jesus seems to be a reaction to the threat of persecution that hangs over the Markan Christians. Mark's image of Jesus is meant to show that neither Jesus' crucifixion nor the fact that he is called Christ indicates that he was an insurrectionist; by implication, Mark's message is that there is no reason to consider the Christian community a subversive movement. However, the fact that Mark claims that the Christians are not rebels does not exclude the possibility that some Christians may have been involved in rebellious activities. Mark suggests that the Christians are unjustly persecuted by the Jewish leaders, but in fact we do not know for certain whether or not Galilean Christians were indeed a cause of social unrest.

² See also, e.g., J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27), New York/London, 2000, pp. 28-29. According to Marcus the hypothesis of an actual persecution is more likely than that of potential persecution. First, Mk 4:37-40 and 6:48-50 make more sense if directed to a persecuted readership. Moreover the sectarian division between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in Mk 4:10-12, as well as the Markan 'prophecies' of persecution are, according to Marcus, more compatible with the hypothesis of actual persecution.

What is of importance here is the observation that in writing his Gospel Mark intended to underline that Jesus was not an anti-Roman rebel, and, as a consequence, the Christians should not be considered insurrectionists. This observation may help us to define Mark's authorial aim in writing his Gospel, which is the purpose of the final chapter of this study.

PART THREE

TOWARDS A CHARACTERIZATION OF MARK'S GOSPEL

CHAPTER SEVEN

MARK'S GOSPEL AS A LITERARY WORK

INTRODUCTION

In the final chapter of this study I shall attempt to characterize Mark's Gospel as a literary work. Thus far I have concluded that the immediate cause for writing the Gospel was the threat of persecution that menaced Mark's readers, and that Mark's depiction of Jesus in his Gospel is a reaction to this situation. These conclusions will now be used to establish Mark's authorial aim, and to clarify why Mark choose to write an account of Jesus' life in order to attain his goal. Subsequently, I intend to reconsider how, judging from the Gospel's form and purpose, Mark's Gospel should be characterized as a literary work, and how it fits into the literature of the Graeco-Roman world as a whole.

1. MARK'S AUTHORIAL AIM AND HIS CHOICE OF A BIOGRAPHICAL FORM

In the preceding chapters of the present study, the main message of Mark's Gospel has been shown to be that Jesus was not an anti-Roman rebel who hoped to re-establish a free and independent Israel. All the major motifs in the Gospel appeared to be connected, in one way or another, with the issue of the correct understanding of Jesus' ministry as the Christ, or with explaining his crucifixion as a miscarriage of justice. Mark's interest in Jesus' identity, the secrecy motif, the lack of understanding of the disciples, his interest in Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, his portrayal of Jesus as a suffering righteous one, and his negative portrayal of the Jewish leadership can all be shown to be part of one single message, i.e. that Jesus, although he is called Christ by his followers and died by crucifixion, was not an anti-Roman rebel.

It is true that in his Gospel the evangelist also deals with other issues, but compared with the theme under discussion, that is, the non-political character of Jesus' ministry, those issues are of minor importance. The passages in Mark's Gospel that do not immediately contribute to the portrayal of Mark's Jesus as God's messenger devoid of political ambitions, all address different issues and serve different aims.¹ They may reflect real debates, or be meant to address actual problems within the Markan community. But they do not offer a basis for an alternative thesis concerning the Gospel's main message.

The main message of Mark's Gospel, then, is that Jesus was not an anti-Roman rebel who hoped to re-establish a free and independent Israel. This message is Mark's reaction to the threat of persecution of Christians, which is the result of the possible interpretation of Jesus as an insurrectionist. Mark's message may therefore be characterized as 'apologetic'; it defends Jesus and his followers against an accusation of subversiveness.

If one wants to specify Mark's authorial aim, however, characterizing Mark's Gospel as 'apologetic' is not sufficient. One must take into account that Mark wrote his Gospel for Christian readers.² He directs his apology to the persecuted Christians themselves, not to their (possible) persecutors. These Christian readers are likely to have believed already that Jesus was not a rebel, and the Church not a rebellious movement. What then did Mark want to achieve by writing his Gospel for them?

Probably Mark feared that the threat of persecution might demoralize at least some of the Galilean Christians. The pressure and hardships caused by the persecutions might lead some of them to doubt

¹ For instance, Mk 2:13-3:6 and 7:1-30 seem to justify the constitution of the Church, as well as the Christians' liberal attitude concerning the Jewish religious rules on fasting, purity, and Sabbath rest. Mk 12:18-44 seems to be an accumulation of polemic or apologetic statements concerning several themes, and directed against various groups. And Mk 9:14-29, 9:33-10:16, and 10:35-45 contain ethical or religious sayings concerning all sorts of issues, such as prayer, divorce, attitudes towards other Christian groups, and the way Christians should relate to each other. Although these passages are not immediately related to the dominant theme of the non-political character of Jesus' ministry, they are still part of Mark's portrayal of Jesus as a sensible person, who was superior to his opponents and provided his followers with ethical instructions.

² See Introduction, pp. 16-17.

whether joining the Christian community had been a wise decision, or even to decide to leave the Church.³ Therefore in his Gospel the evangelist assures his readers, above all, that in becoming Christians they have taken the right decision. Mark's portrayal of Jesus dinst into his readers that Jesus was indeed God's special envoy; therefore the Christians are right to remain faithful to him.⁴

Mark further intends to strengthen and encourage his readers to defend themselves against possible accusations of subversiveness, by assuring them that these accusations are wrong. Jesus was not an insurrectionist, and it is therefore unjust to incriminate the Christians as rebels.⁵ In fact, Mark's depiction of Jesus' ministry and death provides his readers with arguments with which they can defend themselves against the accusations brought against them.

Furthermore, Mark tells his readers not to be discouraged by the apostasy of others, or the disappointing results of the Christian mission.⁶ Nor should they interpret the hardships and sufferings they are facing as an indication that God has forsaken them. On the contrary, according to Mark, everything the Christian community is experiencing is part of God's plan; all the tribulations are signs that the end, that is, the definitive realization of God's kingdom, is near.⁷

Finally, Mark warns his readers not to give up and leave the Church. Those who persist will, according to Mark, be rewarded for their perseverance, but those who give up and become unfaithful will be rejected, and will not be saved at the breakthrough of God's kingdom.⁸

In sum, Mark's aim in writing his Gospel is to confirm its readers in their faithfulness to the Christian message, so that they will be strong enough to resist the pressure caused by possible persecutions.

If this was Mark's aim in writing his work, the question needs to be posed why the evangelist decided to convey his message by means of a story of Jesus' ministry. In the introduction to the present study it was argued that at the time Mark wrote his Gospel writing an account

³ Cf. Mk 4:17.

⁴ See especially Chapter 4, pp. 145-150.

⁵ See Part Two, esp. Evaluation of the Results, pp. 209-211.

⁶ See especially Mk 4:1-34.

⁷ See especially Mk 13:5-37.

⁸ See especially Mk 8:34-9:1 and 13:33-37.

of Jesus' ministry was not a common thing to do. Mark is generally held to have been the first to write an account of some length of Jesus' life. As a result the evangelist's decision to embody his message in an account of Jesus' words and deeds is noteworthy. Why, then, did the evangelist choose an account of Jesus' ministry as the vehicle for his message rather than another literary form?

Generally an author may be supposed to choose the literary form he considers the most suitable for conveying his message and achieving his aim. Precisely which form is the most suitable may depend on a number of factors: the character of the author's message and aim, the intellectual level of his intended readers, his own educational background, abilities, and routine, etc. Furthermore, the author's choice may be influenced by the literary conventions that exist within the wider social and cultural environment in which he and his intended readers are living: a certain authorial aim may usually be expressed by using a certain literary form.

Although one cannot retrieve Mark's deliberations, it is understandable that the evangelist considered an account of Jesus' ministry the most suitable for his purpose. Mark's choice of the Gospel's form is probably to a large extent determined by the character of his message. In his Gospel Mark intends, above all, to react to the persecutions that are caused by the fact that the Christians confess Jesus the crucified Christ. The heart of the believers' problem is Jesus' identity and death. Therefore it is understandable that the evangelist has chosen a literary form that concentrates on the life and death of its subject. Another factor that may have influenced Mark's choice is the fact that a story about Jesus' ministry offered him the possibility not only of substantiating his point of view, but almost of proving it. By showing what 'really happened' the evangelist rules out the possible misunderstanding about Jesus that threatens the well-being of his fellow-Christians. Mark's arguments have more cogency because they are not just listed (as could have been done in a letter or a tract), but explained by way of illustration. Probably, then, Mark considered a story about Jesus the most suitable vehicle for conveying his message because it enabled him to discuss the main issues with maximum cogency and persuasiveness.

2. IS MARK'S GOSPEL TO BE CHARACTERIZED AS AN ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY?

The question remains of how Mark's Gospel as an ancient writing is to be characterized. For a very long time, Mark's Gospel has been considered a biography of Jesus; in the current debate on the Gospel's genre, the view that the Gospel is an ancient biography again seems to be gaining ground.⁹ In the introduction to the present study, it has already been noted that in my view the focus of the current discussion on biography as a possible genre for Mark's Gospel is correct, since the Gospel, like ancient biography, can be characterized as 'a self-contained prose narrative centred upon the career and death of a single individual.'¹⁰ However, this statement does not do full justice to the nature of the Gospel. It is necessary to re-open the debate about whether Mark's Gospel is to be characterized as an ancient biography.

For several decades of the twentieth century, there was a strong consensus that this question should be answered to the negative. Under the influence of form-criticism, Mark's Gospel was considered a compilation of traditional material that was formed within the early Church, and put together by a redactor. Therefore, according to the form-critics, the Gospel is not literature in the strict sense of the word, and cannot be compared, for instance, with Graeco-Roman biography. According to the form-critics, the Gospels are not biographies, but constitute a new genre that is unique to Christianity.¹¹ Since the 1970s the form-critical approach to the issue of Mark's

⁹ Some of the overviews of the discussion about the Gospels' genre available have been listed in the Introduction, p. 12, note 17.

¹⁰ See C. Bryan, *A Preface to Mark. Notes on the Gospel in its Literary and Cultural Settings*, New York/Oxford, 1993, pp. 23-24.

¹¹ See, e.g., R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (FRLANT 29), Göttingen, 1921, pp. 225-229; K.L. Schmidt, 'Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte,' in H. Schmidt (ed.), *Eucharisterion. Studien zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* II, Göttingen, 1923, pp. 50-134. This view has had its defenders until recent times; see, e.g., G. Bornkamm, art. 'Evangelien, formgeschichtlich,' *RGK* II, cols. 750-753; W. Schmithals, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, Berlin/New York, 1985, pp. 416-417. The view that the Gospels constitute their own literary genre has been defended on the basis of other arguments by, e.g., R.A. Guelich, 'The Gospel Genre,' in P. Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien. Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982* (WUNT 28), Tübingen, 1983, pp. 183-219.

genre has been heavily criticized. It does indeed have some serious weaknesses.

First, one may object that the fact that Mark included pre-Markan traditions in his Gospel is in itself no impediment for considering Mark's Gospel an ancient biography. An author who uses traditional material can select or rearrange this material in such a way that it suits the genre of his work.

Second, the form-critical idea that Mark was a redactor rather than a creative author is no longer tenable. Literary criticism has made it clear that in writing his story the evangelist applied literary techniques and devices, and introduced his own literary motifs. Moreover, as has become clear in Part Two of the present study, Mark's Gospel is not just a random selection of traditional stories, but has a clear message and purpose. Mark must, therefore, be considered a conscious author who deliberately selected and arranged his material, and consciously chose the literary form he used.

Finally, it must be said that the form-critical idea that Mark's Gospel is a unique product of Christianity that has no connection with contemporary Graeco-Roman literature is not unproblematic. Every author belongs to a culture. Every book, therefore, is an expression of that culture, and is inevitably influenced in both form and content by the author's cultural environment. The form-critical idea that Mark's Gospel is a literary product without any literary parallels presupposes that Christianity is a unique phenomenon that developed on its own, apart from its cultural surroundings. It goes without saying, however, that first-century Christianity arose from, and was part of, contemporary Hellenistic culture.

The form-critical approach, then, is unsuitable for obtaining a proper answer to the question of whether or not Mark's Gospel belongs to the genre of ancient biography. Therefore, most modern scholars try to solve the problem of Mark's genre using a different approach, that is the so-called 'analogical' approach.¹²

¹² I have borrowed the expression 'analogical approach' from R.A. Guelich, 'The Gospel Genre,' p. 185. Compare to this the term 'analogy model' used by W.S. Vorster, 'Kerygma/History and the Gospel Genre,' *NTS* 29 (1983), pp. 87-95, esp. p. 88; and 'Analogiemodell' used by W.S. Vorster, 'Der Ort der Gattung Evangelium in der Literaturgeschichte,' *VF* 29 (1984), pp. 2-25, esp. p. 10.

The basis of the 'analogical' approach is the idea that a genre consists of a concrete group of texts that share a set of essential characteristics. If one wants to classify a literary work under a particular genre, one needs to establish that it contains the essential characteristics of that genre. Thus according to the 'analogical' approach the question of whether Mark's Gospel is a biography should be answered by examining whether the Gospel shares the essential characteristics of Graeco-Roman biography.

The main problem with the 'analogical' approach is that the answer to the question of whether Mark's Gospel belongs to the genre of Graeco-Roman biography depends to a large extent on how that genre is defined. A number of scholars have proposed definitions of Graeco-Roman biography. Those definitions differ from each other in scope, and as a result the conclusions concerning the genre of Mark's Gospel also differ.

Albrecht Dihle, for instance, has argued that only the series of parallel biographies written by Plutarch belong to the literary genre of Greek biography in the strict sense.¹³ An essential characteristic of this genre, according to Dihle, is moral orientation. Furthermore, Greek biographies have as their fundamental idea that nature is unchangeable, and that the true, unalterable character of a person becomes visible during his lifetime. The Gospels, however, do not have such a moral orientation, nor do they share the static view on history and character. The Gospels, according to Dihle, are based rather on a scheme of historical development which was part of the Christian message right from the beginning, the scheme of prophecy and fulfilment. Dihle, then, maintains that the Gospels do not belong to the genre of Greek biography, but are related rather to Greek historical writings.¹⁴

Charles H. Talbert, whose definition of Graeco-Roman biography

¹³ A. Dihle, 'Die Evangelien und die griechische Biographie,' in P. Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien. Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982* (WUNT 28), Tübingen, 1983, pp. 383-411. See also A. Dihle, 'Die Evangelien und die biographische Tradition der Antike,' *ZTK* 80 (1983), pp. 33-49.

¹⁴ A position similar to that of Dihle has been defended for Mark's Gospel by Adela Yarbro Collins. See A. Yarbro Collins, *Is Mark's Gospel a Life of Jesus? The Question of Genre* (The Père Marquette Lecture in Theology 1989), Milwaukee, 1990, also included in A. Yarbro Collins, *The Beginning of the Gospel. Probing of Mark in Context*, Minneapolis, 1992, pp. 1-38.

is much broader than Dihle's, comes to the opposite conclusion.¹⁵ According to Talbert it is constitutive of ancient biography that it shows 'the concern to depict the essence of a significant person, that is, to expose what sort of person it really is.'¹⁶ Everything else may vary: the literary form (prose, speech, dialogue, collection of sayings), the extent of coverage of the subject's life (from birth to death, or a much shorter period), the kind of organising principle (chronological or thematical or both), the type of material used to expose the subject's character (words or deeds or a combination of the two), etc. Also the authorial aim of biographies may vary. Talbert concludes that, since all four canonical Gospels have as their subject a significant individual, and intend to indicate what sort of person Jesus was, they all belong to the genre of ancient biography. As to the authorial aim, all four Gospels are meant to dispel a false image of Jesus and to present him as 'the expression and the norm of a community's values.'

In other words, Dihle and Talbert disagree about the definition of ancient biography, and as a result their answers to the question whether Mark's Gospel belongs to that genre also differ. Talbert, on the one hand, works with a definition that is very broad, and thus considers Mark's Gospel a biography without prevarication. Dihle, on the other hand, restricts the genre to the series of parallel biographies of Plutarch, and as a matter of course denies that Mark's Gospel belongs to it.

It must be noted here that in fact neither of these definitions of ancient biography is workable. Dihle's definition, first of all, is far too strict. It applies to only a very small proportion of ancient biographical literature and leaves a large group of related writings unclassified.

¹⁵ C.H. Talbert, art. 'Biography, Ancient,' *ABD* I, pp. 745-749, esp. p. 748. For Talbert's view on the Gospels' genre see also C.H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (SBL MS 20), Missoula, 1974; idem, *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels*, Philadelphia, 1977; idem, 'Biographies of Philosophers and Rulers as Instruments of Religious Propaganda in Mediterranean Antiquity,' *ANRW* II 16, 2 (1978), pp. 1619-1651; idem, 'Prophecies of Future Greatness. The Contribution of Graeco-Roman Biographies to an Understanding of Luke 1:5-4:15,' in J.L. Crenshaw, S. Sandmel (edd.), *The Devine Helmsman. Studies on God's Control of Human Events* (FS L.H. Silberman), New York, 1980, pp. 129-141; idem, 'The Gospel and the Gospels,' *Interpretation* 33 (1979), pp. 351-362; idem, 'Once Again. Gospel Genre,' *Semeia* 43 (1988), pp. 53-73, with a response by D.P. Moessner, pp. 75-84.

¹⁶ C.H. Talbert, art. 'Biography, Ancient,' p. 748.

If these writings were classified according to definitions that are equally strict, one would end up with a very complex system of related genres or subgenres only slightly different from each other. Such a system of genres would be impractical and pointless because of its complexity. Talbert's definition of ancient biography, on the other hand, is unusable because it is too broad. According to Talbert, the only characteristic common to all biographies is their focus on a single person. As a consequence, a biography according to Talbert's definition may be a prose narrative, a dialogue, a speech, an encomium, a collection of sayings or anything else as long as it focuses on a single person. Thus the texts that belong to the genre of ancient biography as defined by Talbert may differ from one another in many respects, and bear only little resemblance. Talbert's definition of ancient biography, then, does not add much to our understanding of the literature included by it, because it is not sufficiently rigorous.

What is needed, then, is a definition of ancient biography that is distinctive but not too narrow. A definition that, in my view, meets these criteria would define ancient biographies as prose narratives of medium length with a strong concentration and focus on a single person which determines the whole setting of the book. This definition is not so narrow as to exclude most of the ancient writings that might be characterized as 'biographical,' but still marks out ancient biography in relation to other, related genres such as ancient historiography, encomium, and novel.

It would be too easy to conclude that since Mark's Gospel conforms to the proposed definition it is therefore an example of the genre of ancient biography. If Mark intended his Gospel to be a biography of Jesus, one would expect it to bear a clear resemblance to other examples of the genre. Therefore it must be considered whether or not Mark's Gospel shares any characteristics not mentioned in the definition with other literary works that conform to it.

Here a study by Richard A. Burridge deserves to be mentioned. It is entitled *What are the Gospels?*, and was published in 1992.¹⁷ Burridge compares a number of Graeco-Roman literary works that con-

¹⁷ R.A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (SNTS MS 70), Cambridge, 1992.

form to the definition proposed, and observes that they share the following characteristics.¹⁸

Ancient biographies, according to Burridge, usually consist of a bare chronological framework with topical inserts, and contain a mixture of literary units (anecdotes, speeches etc.), that are selected from a wide range of oral and written sources. A biographer displays his subject's character indirectly through words and deeds, and chooses from a range of topics and motifs, such as ancestry, childhood and education, traits of character, deeds and virtues, and death, selecting those that suit his subject.

There are also areas in which the genre shows variety. Burridge mentions differences in, for instance, opening features of the biographies (the presence or absence of a title, prologue etc.), style and level, tone and mood (mostly respectful and serious, but sometimes lighter), and extent of coverage of the subject's life. The biographies also differ in their authorial intention. According to Burridge, biographies may be encomiastic, exemplary or informative, or may be meant to entertain, or preserve the memory of the subject; they may also have a didactic or apologetic and polemic purpose.

In other words, Burridge concludes that ancient biography, if defined distinctively but not unnecessarily narrowly, is a very flexible genre. It manifests itself in a great variety of different forms which show only a limited number of common features. Burridge's conclusions in this respect have been taken over and confirmed by other scholars, for instance, Christopher Bryan and Dirk Frickenschmidt.¹⁹ The question that interests us now is whether Mark's Gospel shares the common features of ancient biography, and should be considered to belong to this genre.

First of all, it must be noted that Burridge's conclusions about the genre of ancient biography invalidate most of the arguments that in

¹⁸ R.A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels?*, pp. 128-190. Burridge includes the following ancient writings into his investigation: Isocrates' *Evagoras*, Xenophon's *Agésilas*, Satyrus' *Euripides*, Nepos' *Atticus*, Philo's *Moses*, Tacitus' *Agricola*, Plutarch's *Cato Minor*, Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars*, Lucian's *Demonax*, and Philostratus' *Apollonius of Tyana*.

¹⁹ C. Bryan, *A Preface to Mark*, pp. 32-64; D. Frickenschmidt, *Evangelium als Biographie. Die vier Evangelien im Rahmen antiker Erzählkunst* (TANZ 22), Tübingen, 1997. See also, e.g., D.E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (LEC 8), Philadelphia, 1987, pp. 32-36.

the debate about the Gospel's genre have been advanced against the idea of Mark's Gospel as an ancient biography.

Scholars have claimed, for instance, that the Gospel should not be considered a biography because of its lack of interest in biographical details, such as Jesus' birth, youth, education, and appearance, its lack of character development, and its emphasis on Jesus' death.²⁰ Burrige's study, however, has made it clear that topics such as the subject's descent, birth, youth, or education, which are generally present in modern biographies, could be included or omitted in ancient biographies depending on the subject treated. Furthermore, the observation that a biographer displays his subject's character indirectly through words and deeds invalidates the objection that Mark's Gospel lacks a depiction of Jesus' character. Finally, also the Gospels' emphasis on Jesus' death is shown to remain within the possibilities of Graeco-Roman biography: an ancient biographer was not obliged to give equal treatment to the whole life of his subject, but was free to omit information that was inopportune, or to discuss certain aspects of the biographee's life in more detail. In fact, all the most common arguments that have been advanced against the characterization of Mark's Gospel as an ancient biography have proved to be the result of confusing modern notions with ancient concepts.²¹

So, is Mark's Gospel an ancient biography? Reviewing all ancient literature one must conclude that, as far as the literary form is concerned, Mark's Gospel has most in common with ancient biography. For, like ancient biography, Mark's Gospel can be characterized as a self-contained prose narrative of medium length with a strong con-

²⁰ E.g., J. Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markus-Evangeliums und der ältesten evangelischen Überlieferung*, Göttingen, 1903, esp. pp. 12-22; G. Bornkamm, art. 'Evangelien, formgeschichtlich,' col. 750; E. Haenchen, 'Neutestamentliche und gnostische Evangelien,' in W. Eltester (ed.), *Christentum und Gnosis* (BZNW 37), Berlin, 1969, pp. 19-45, esp. p. 30.

²¹ See, e.g., H. Cancik, 'Die Gattung Evangelium. Das Evangelium des Markus im Rahmen der antiken Historiographie,' and his 'Bios und Logos. Formengeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Lukians "Demonax,"' in H. Cancik (ed.), *Markus-Philologie. Historische, literargeschichtliche und stilistische Untersuchungen zum zweiten Evangelium* (WUNT 33), Tübingen, 1984, pp. 85-113 and 115-129 respectively, see esp. pp. 94-96 and 129; G.N. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching*, Cambridge, 1974, pp. 118-126. Cf. K. Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament,' *ANRW* II 25, 2 (1984), pp. 1031-1432, esp. pp. 1238-1240; idem, *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments*, Heidelberg, 1984, p. 347; D.E. Aune, *The New Testament*, pp. 32-36.

centration and focus on a single individual. If BurrIDGE is right in observing that ancient biographies usually consist of a bare chronological framework and contain a mixture of literary units, the overall structure of Mark's Gospel seems to resemble that of ancient biographies. I am inclined even to go one step further and admit that in light of the fact that ancient biography, if defined reasonably, appears to be a fairly broad and flexible genre, there is no reason why Mark's Gospel should not fit within this varied group of writings. On the other hand, in my view the characterization of Mark's Gospel as an ancient biography is not very meaningful, as I will now explain.

Generally speaking, for the modern reader the awareness of the genre of an ancient text may be helpful for understanding that text in two respects. First, the genre of a text may give insight into its overall purpose. A modern reader who is familiar with Greek tragedy, for instance, will know that it was meant to be performed on stage and arouse particular emotions in the audience, different emotions from those aimed at in comedy. Such an *a priori* insight into the purpose of a text is useful, for it may help the interpreter to decide, for instance, whether a certain scene is meant to be serious or a comic persiflage.

Furthermore, the awareness of the genre of an ancient text may be helpful to a modern reader if it gives insight into the literary form the author had in mind in writing the text. The genre of a text can account, for instance, for the structure of that text, or certain elements or motifs within it. Awareness of the genre of a text may therefore be helpful in reading it and in interpreting the elements and motifs that come with the genre. A modern reader who is familiar with the genre of apocalypse, for instance, is aware of the possibility that part of what is presented as a prediction of future events may in fact be *ex eventu* prophecy. The awareness of the existence of such *ex eventu* prophecy may contribute to a better understanding of the author's actual situation and his authorial aim.

The characterization of Mark's Gospel as an ancient biography does not improve our understanding of the work in either of these two respects. First, ancient biography, as has become clear above, is a very broad and flexible genre which includes a number of possible authorial intentions. As BurrIDGE has shown, ancient biographies may, for instance, be encomiastic, exemplary or informative, or have

a didactic or apologetic and polemic purpose. As a result, the characterization of Mark's Gospel as an ancient biography does not include any clear information about the Gospel's overall purpose. Characterizing Mark's Gospel as an ancient biography may even lead to an incorrect understanding of the Gospel's purpose. Scholars who are familiar with the genre of ancient biography may too easily jump to conclusions concerning the purpose of Mark's Gospel.²² And modern readers who are not familiar with the genre may think that in writing his Gospel the evangelist intended to give an accurate historical account of Jesus' life.

Second, the conclusion that Mark's Gospel is an ancient biography does not provide us with a clear insight into the Gospel's literary form, nor is it, as far as I can see, helpful in interpreting important elements or motifs which occur in Mark's Gospel. The main reason for this is that although Mark's Gospel can be characterized as an ancient biography, it has no real equivalent among the extant ancient biographies that is close in time and might give us an insight into the literary form the evangelist had in mind when he wrote his Gospel.²³ Two characteristics of Mark's Gospel are an impediment to finding such an equivalent.

The first obstacle in finding a close literary parallel to Mark's Gospel is the Gospel's popular level and style. Most of the biographies known to us are literary writings more sophisticated than Mark's Gospel.²⁴ The Gospel's popular character is no reason to deny that it is a biography, for it is likely that the style and standards of

²² This seems to be the case, for instance, in D. Frickenschmidt, *Evangelium als Biographie*, pp. 386-387. Frickenschmidt defines Mark's Gospel as a biography of a public figure, and concludes that it is meant to reveal Jesus' true identity and present him as an example worth imitating ('Lebensmodell'). The latter conclusion seems to be the result of an idea that biographies are meant to be exemplary, rather than the outcome of a thorough investigation into the purpose of Mark's Gospel.

²³ See D.E. Aune, *The New Testament*, p. 46; idem, 'The Gospels as Hellenistic Biography,' *Mosaic* 20 (1987), pp. 1-10, esp. p. 2. Comparing Mark's Gospel to biographical writings that were written much later is not helpful, for even if they bore a striking resemblance to the Gospel, it could not be proven that the similarities are the result of the independent use of the same literary model. It is possible that the Gospels influenced biographical conventions. Therefore, later biographical literature, such as the acts of martyrs, Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, or Jamblichus' or Porphyrius' *Life of Pythagoras* are not admissible as reference material to Mark's Gospel.

²⁴ See, e.g., D.E. Aune, *The New Testament*, pp. 34-35 and 63-64; idem, 'The Gospels as Hellenistic Biography,' pp. 8-9.

educated authors were imitated by writers of popular literature.²⁵ It is, however, a complicating factor in finding a close parallel, since hardly any popular biographies have been handed down to us. As far as I am aware, the only extant popular biography close in time to Mark's Gospel is the anonymous *Life of Aesop*, which may go back to the first century AD.²⁶

Another complicating factor in finding a close parallel to Mark's Gospel is the fact that most of the motifs used by Mark to depict the life of his subject have been inspired not so much by the literary conventions of Graeco-Roman biography as by the evangelist's Jewish-Christian frame of reference.²⁷ I will give three examples to illustrate this.

In the opening story of his Gospel, Mark does not introduce Jesus by mentioning his descent, birth or education, as many Graeco-Roman biographers would have done. The evangelist, who wishes to express the Christian conviction that Jesus is God's special envoy, introduces the main character of his book by presenting him as part of God's eschatological plan and by relating his heavenly calling as Son of God (Mk 1:1-11).²⁸ It is Mark's Christian interest in Jesus as God's unique, eschatological envoy, not the biographical conventions, which determines the opening section of the Gospel.

A similar observation can be made concerning those sections in the first half of the Gospel (Mk 1:1-8:26) in which Mark intends to underline Jesus' identity as God's special messenger. In these sections, Mark pictures Jesus by using traditions rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The story of Jesus stilling the storm in Mk 4:35-41, for instance, reflects ideas occurring in several ancient psalms that mention God's power to quell nature in this way.²⁹ Similarly, the story of Jesus

²⁵ See D.E. Aune, *The New Testament*, pp. 63-64; idem, 'The Gospels as Hellenistic Biography,' p. 9; R.A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels?*, p. 242.

²⁶ See also the comprehensive overview of ancient biographical literature in K. Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament,' pp. 1232-1236.

²⁷ Other aspects of Mark's Gospel have also been mentioned as a reason for its special position within the genre of ancient biography. See, e.g., F. Fendler, *Studien zum Markusevangelium. Zur Gattung, Chronologie, Messiasgeheimnistheorie und Überlieferung des zweiten Evangeliums* (GthA 49), Göttingen, 1991, pp. 78-80 and 191; Fendler considers the evangelist's anonymity a reason to regard Mark's Gospel as an ancient biography of a special type.

²⁸ See also Chapter 4, pp. 145-147.

²⁹ See Ps 107:23-32; 65:7; 89:9; 93:4; cf. Ps 106:8-9; Isa 51:9-10. See Chapter 4, p. 149.

walking on water in Mk 6:45-52 reflects the Jewish tradition according to which God walks on the sea.³⁰ The story about Jairus' daughter in Mk 5:21-24 and 35-43, in which Jesus is said to raise a girl from the dead, recalls similar stories about Israel's prophets Elijah and Elisha in 1 and 2 Kings.³¹ Furthermore, the stories of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand in Mk 6:35-44 and of the four thousand in Mk 8:1-10 reflect a tradition about the prophet Elisha that can be traced back to 2 Kings.³²

In other words, most of the accounts of Jesus' miraculous deeds in the first half of Mark's Gospel find their origin in Jewish traditions that have been applied to Jesus, either by Mark himself or by Christians before him.³³ It can be argued, of course, that the healing and miracle stories in Mark's Gospel are comparable to the anecdotes that occur in Graeco-Roman biographies, since both are meant to reveal 'what kind of person the subject is.' It must, however, be said that at least at certain points Mark's view concerning Jesus' identity can better be clarified by comparing the Gospel with traditions on healings and other miracles contained in the Jewish Scriptures rather than with ancient biographies.

As a final example, one can cite Mark's depiction of Jesus' arrest, trial and execution in Mk 14 and 15. As has already been argued in Chapter 6, Mark's depiction of Jesus in these chapters resembles that of the traditional image of the suffering righteous one as occurring, for instance, in a number of psalms, Wisdom of Jesus Sirach, and Wisdom of Solomon. Motifs such as Jesus being deserted by his followers, being accused by false witnesses, remaining silent in the face of his accusers, and being maltreated and mocked prove to be rooted in the traditional image of a suffering righteous one as occurring in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish Scriptures. In other words, the fact that Mark relates Jesus' death may very well be in accordance with the genre of ancient biography, but, if one wants to appreciate the way Mark depicts the events and understand his intentions, one

³⁰ See Job 9:8; 38:16; Ps 77:19 (76:20); Sir 24:5. See Chapter 4, p. 149, and note 16.

³¹ See 1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:8-37.

³² See 2 Kings 4:42-44.

³³ Compare also, for instance, the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem in Mk 11:1-11, which recalls Zech 9:9 where Zechariah prophesies that a future, ideal king of Israel will enter into Sion 'riding on a donkey.'

needs to turn to parallels in the Jewish Scriptures, not to Graeco-Roman biographies.

These three examples may suffice to illustrate that much in Mark's Gospel finds its origin not in the generic conventions of Graeco-Roman biography, but in the Jewish-Christian tradition used by the evangelist. This observation may not be a reason to deny that Mark's Gospel is an ancient biography; for, according to recent studies mentioned above, ancient biography was a fairly broad and flexible genre. It does, however, hamper a comparison of Mark's Gospel with other ancient biographies.³⁴ Especially in combination with the Gospel's low literary level and style, its Jewish-Christian frame of reference means that the Gospel stands without a clear literary parallel among the extant Graeco-Roman biographies that could be helpful in interpreting Mark's Gospel.³⁵

³⁴ A similar position has been defended by others. Hubert Cancik, for instance, has argued that the Gospels, including Mark's, are related to ancient biography, but are also slightly different because of their affinity to Jewish prophetic traditions. (H. Cancik, 'Die Gattung Evangelium.' The same position is taken by L. Schenke, *Das Markusevangelium* (UT 405), Stuttgart/Berlin, 1988, pp. 145-147.) David E. Aune has maintained that the canonical Gospels remain within the parameters of ancient biographical conventions, but are to be considered ancient biographies of a distinctive type because of their Jewish-Christian content. (D.E. Aune, *The New Testament*, esp. p. 29. For Aune's view on the Gospels' genre see also D.E. Aune, *The New Testament*, pp. 17-76; idem, 'The Gospels as Hellenistic Biography;' idem, 'The Problem of the Genre of the Gospels. A Critique of C.H. Talbert's What is a Gospel?,' in R.T. France, D. Wenham (edd.), *Gospel Perspectives. Studies on the History and Tradition in the Four Gospels* II, Sheffield, 1981, pp. 9-60; idem, 'Greco-Roman Biography,' in D.E. Aune (ed.), *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament. Selected Forms and Genres*, Atlanta, 1988, pp. 107-126.) Finally, Detlev Dormeyer has repeatedly discussed the issue of the Gospels' genre, especially that of Mark's Gospel, presenting the thesis that the Gospels are a mixture of Graeco-Roman biographies of philosophers and Old Testament biographical stories about prophets and kings. (D. Dormeyer, H. Frankemölle, 'Evangelium als literarische Gattung und als theologischer Begriff. Tendenzen und Aufgaben der Evangelienforschung im 20. Jahrhundert. Mit einer Untersuchung des Markusevangeliums in seinem Verhältnis zur antiken Biographie,' *ANRW* II 25, 2 (1984), pp. 1543-1704; D. Dormeyer, *Evangelium als literarische und theologische Gattung* (EF 263), Darmstadt, 1989; idem, *Das Neue Testament im Rahmen der antiken Literaturgeschichte. Eine Einführung*, Darmstadt, 1993, pp. 199-230; idem, *Das Markusevangelium als Idealbiographie von Jesus Christus, dem Nazarener* (SBB 43), Stuttgart, 1999.)

³⁵ David E. Aune notes that the same is true for a number of other ancient biographical writings, such as the anonymous *Life of Secundus the Silent Philosopher*, Lucian's *Demonax*, Tacitus' *Agricola*, and Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*. I agree with Aune that for this reason the lack of an exact parallel to Mark's Gospel is not a valid reason to exclude the Gospel from the genre of ancient biography. See D.E. Aune, *The New Testament*, p. 46; idem, 'The Gospels

My answer to the question as to whether or not Mark's Gospel is to be characterized as an ancient biography can be summarized as follows. Whether one considers Mark's Gospel an ancient biography depends to a large extent on the definition of biography chosen. But a definition that is well-balanced between too narrow and too broad is likely to include Mark's Gospel, especially since ancient biography proves to be a fairly broad and flexible genre. The characterization of Mark's Gospel as an ancient biography, however, is not very helpful.

First, the flexibility of the genre of ancient biography has as a consequence that the characterization of Mark's Gospel as an ancient biography does not yield any clear information about the evangelist's purpose in writing. Secondly, the Gospel's low literary level and style as well as its markedly Jewish-Christian frame of reference make it impossible to find a literary parallel among the extant ancient biographies that is close in time. Consequently, we lack a parallel that might give us more insight in the literary form the evangelist had in mind when he wrote his Gospel. Thus, theoretically Mark is comparable with ancient biography, but, on a more practical level, such a comparison does not really contribute to our understanding of the Gospel.³⁶

3. TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE CHARACTERIZATION OF MARK'S GOSPEL

A meaningful characterization of Mark's Gospel must, in my view, take as its starting-point the observation that the Gospel is above all an apologetic document written in a polemic situation. As has been argued above, this situation was that of a Galilean Christian commu-

as Hellenistic Biography,' p. 2. On Lucian's *Demonax* in this respect, see also H. Cancik, 'Bios und Logos.'

³⁶ I wish to stress that this conclusion is not necessarily transferable to the other canonical or apocryphal Gospels. In Luke's Gospel, for instance, there are elements or stories that can be clarified by a comparison with ancient biography. For instance, the theme of Jesus' precocious intelligence in the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple in Lk 2:41-52 reflects a similar theme in Graeco-Roman biographical tradition. Compare, for instance, Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* I 3, 1; Plutarch, *Alexander* V 1-2; *Theseus* VI 2; *Themistocles* II 1-2; *Dion* IV 2; *Cicero* II 2; Nepos, *Atticus* I 2-3; Philo, *Moses* I 5, 21. See also H.J. de Jonge, 'Sonship, Wisdom, Infancy. Luke II.41-51a,' *NTS* 24 (1978), pp. 317-354, esp. pp. 339-342; C.H. Talbert, 'Prophecies of Future Greatness,' esp. pp. 134-135.

nity that suffered from the aftermath of the Jewish revolt. The strict maintenance of public order in answer to that revolt caused a situation in which the Christians' adherence to Jesus became highly dangerous. Mark's Gospel addresses these Christians, and has the intention of inciting them to sustain the pressures they are experiencing.

As to its literary form, Mark's Gospel is best categorized as an ancient biography. The Gospel's biographical form, however, is secondary to its overall purpose. It is merely a vehicle to convey the evangelist's apologetic message. To Mark, writing a biography of Jesus was not an aim in itself, but a means of attaining his objective. This is warranted by three observations.

First, Mark shows no interest in biographical details. The evangelist does not include biographical information as to, for instance, Jesus' descent, birth, youth, education, character, age, or appearance. Instead Mark includes stories that present Jesus as God's special envoy. As was noted in the previous section, Mark does not open, for example, his Gospel by relating a story about Jesus' descent or birth, but by telling his readers that Jesus is God's special envoy whose coming was announced by Israel's prophets and John the Baptist, and that God himself appointed Jesus as his Son (Mk 1:1-11). Furthermore, Mark does not describe Jesus' character or habits, but underlines his identity as the Son of God by relating stories about Jesus' healings and miracles (*passim* in Mk 1-8). In other words, Mark is not interested in biographical details, but concentrates entirely on relating characteristics of Jesus that serve the Gospel's apologetic purpose.³⁷

Second, although Mark's Gospel has a chronological framework as a consequence of the evangelist's choice of the biographical genre, the actual structure of the Gospel's story is in fact determined by Mark's apologetic intentions. The narrative material within the chronological framework is thematically organized in such a way that it gradually unfolds Mark's arguments.

The first half of Mark's Gospel (Mk 1:1-8:30) concentrates on the

³⁷ It should be stressed once again that this is not true for all Gospels. Luke, for instance, certainly has a biographical interest in writing his Gospel, and includes biographical details such as stories about Jesus' birth (Lk 1:26-38 and 2:1-20), youth (Lk 2:40-52), and descent (Lk 3:23-38). Matthew too includes Jesus' descent (Mt 1:1-17) and birth (Mt 1:18-25 and 2:1-12), for instance. Even in these instances, however, a christological intention is never fully absent.

issues of Jesus' authority and identity. Subsequently, Mark inculcates the idea that Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, must suffer, die, and rise again (Mk 8:31-10:45). The evangelist proclaims that, as the inaugurator of the kingdom of God, Jesus will not re-establish a free and independent Israel; Mark's Jesus rather heralds the destruction of the temple and the last trace of Jewish autonomy, that is, the Sanhedrin. Instead of assuming power over Israel, Mark's Jesus will return from heaven at the definitive breakthrough of God's kingdom in order to take care of his followers (Mk 10:46-13:37). Finally, Mark explains to his readers that Jesus' crucifixion was a result of the ill will of his opponents, and that he was in fact a righteous person who died because of his faithfulness to God (Mk 14-16).³⁸

Thus Mark's Gospel is made up of recognizable parts, each of which has a dominant theme, and which together represent a well-structured line of reasoning. The Gospel's story as a whole is, so to speak, a narrative argument against the accusation of subversiveness that might be addressed to the Markan Christians. Although the Gospel has a chronological and geographical framework, the sequence of the events in the Gospel is not so much determined by time or location, as by the evangelist's apologetic line of reasoning.

Third, the 'loose ends' in the Gospel's story show that Mark was focused above all on conveying his message, not so much on writing a coherent and consistent account of Jesus' life. I will give two examples of such 'loose ends.'

A critical reader of Mark will note that the fact that Jesus' identity is known to Bartimaeus in Mk 10:47-48, and the crowd in Mk 11:8-10 conflicts with the fact that until Mk 10:45 Mark's Jesus reveals his identity only to the Twelve. It remains unclear in Mark's Gospel how Bartimaeus and the crowd discover who Jesus is. This is all the more notable because in the foregoing chapters Mark's Jesus makes an effort to keep his identity a secret from everyone outside the Twelve until after his death and resurrection.³⁹

Such an inconsistency should not be ascribed too easily to the evangelist's incompetence. The way in which Mark makes the leading Jews responsible for Jesus' death, for instance, proves that he is capable of elaborating a theme successfully. The inconsistency be-

³⁸ See Chapter 6.

³⁹ See Mk 1:25, 1:34, 3:12, 8:30, and 9:9. See also Chapter 5, pp. 180-181.

tween Bartimaeus' unaccountable awareness of Jesus' identity in Mk 10:47-48 and the secrecy motif in the previous part of the Gospel is best explained as the result of a change of interest on the part of the evangelist.

The main issue in Mark's Gospel until Mk 10:45 is Jesus' true identity as God's eschatological envoy. In connection with this issue, the evangelist introduces the secrecy motif in order to show his reader that Jesus tries to preclude the rise of a false idea about the character and aim of his ministry as the Christ. It was noted above in Chapter 4 that, from the story of Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52) onwards, Mark's interest shifts to arguing that the breakthrough of God's kingdom heralded by Jesus will not imply the restoration of the earthly kingdom of Israel. The story of Bartimaeus and that of Jesus entering Jerusalem serve the evangelist's new interest. The fact that they clash with the secrecy motif in the preceding part of the Gospel does not seem to trouble the evangelist. He fails to mark the 'breaking' of the secret; he simply seems to forget about it. Apparently Mark is mainly concerned with conveying his message. The consistency of the Gospel's story is of minor importance to him.

A similar observation can be made concerning the part of the crowd in Jesus' trial before Pilate. Throughout Mark's Gospel Jesus is followed by a crowd of people who are well disposed towards him, to such an extent even that the leading Jews are said to feel threatened by Jesus' popularity and influence.⁴⁰ Thus, the malicious disposition of the crowd in Mk 15:6-14 comes as a surprise.⁴¹ It remains unclear what changed the crowd's attitude towards Jesus or whether the evangelist is thinking of a different group of people from those that had followed him through Galilee to Jerusalem. The discrepancy between the malicious disposition of the crowd in Mk 15:6-14 and their enthusiasm towards Jesus earlier in Mark's Gospel is best understood if one takes into account that in Mk 15:6-14 Mark's interest differs from that elsewhere in his Gospel.

Mark often introduces the crowd as Jesus' audience in order to

⁴⁰ See Mk 11:18; 12:12; cf. Mk 14:1-2.

⁴¹ The crowd (ὄχλος) 'with swords and clubs' in Mk 14:43 seem to be a different group of people from the crowd that follow Jesus throughout the Gospel. In this verse, ὄχλος refers rather to a group of assistants of the members of the Sanhedrin who are thought to be responsible for Jesus' arrest.

create a setting for Jesus' words or actions.⁴² Sometimes the evangelist uses the crowd as a literary entity with a more distinct role, to stress Jesus' exceptional demeanour.⁴³ In all these cases the evangelist needs the crowd to be well disposed towards Jesus. In Mk 15:6-14, however, the crowd is introduced for a different reason. Here Mark intends to make clear to his readers that Jesus' crucifixion was the result of the manipulatory behaviour of the leading Jews. Therefore, Mark presents Pilate as doing everything possible to resist the pressure of the Jewish leaders who are determined to have Jesus killed. Pilate's final attempt to save Jesus is letting the crowd decide about his fate (Mk 15:6-10). This attempt fails because the people, stirred up by the chief priests, demand for Jesus' crucifixion (Mk 15:11-14). Within the context of Mk 15:6-14, then, the malice of the crowd serves Mark's intention of showing his readers that Pilate was convinced of Jesus' innocence. The fact that the crowd's behaviour in Mk 15:6-14 is inconsistent with their attitude towards Jesus in the rest of the Gospel is apparently of minor importance to the evangelist.

In other words, the 'loose ends' in the Gospel, two of which have been discussed here, are, in my view, best explained as a result of the evangelist focusing on the point he intends to make in a certain section, rather than on the consistency of the Gospel's story as a whole.⁴⁴

The three observations discussed above all lead to the same conclusion. The lack of biographical interest in Mark's Gospel, the fact that the Gospel's structure is dominated by Mark's apologetic intentions, and, finally, the observation that the evangelist was concerned

⁴² See, e.g., Mk 3:32; 5:21, 24, 27, 30, 31; 6:34; 8:1, 2, 6; 10:1, 46.

⁴³ See, e.g., Mk 2:4, 13; 3:9, 20; 4:1; 9:15.

⁴⁴ A similar observation could be made with regard to several other passages in Mark's Gospel. Some scholars have noted, for instance, that Jesus' injunction to remain silent about his raising the dead girl in Mk 8:26 is almost impossible, since everyone seems to know already that she is dead (cf. Mk 5:38-40). The inconsistency does not seem to bother the evangelist; the motif of Jesus' commands to silence is more important to him than the coherence of his story. (See also, e.g., T.A. Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation. An Examination of the Philosophy of St. Mark's Gospel*, Ithaca/New York, 1963, pp. 71-72.) Many further details in Mark's Gospel remain problematic. Mark does not explain, for example, in which insurrection Barrabas is thought to have been involved (Mk 15:6-7), or why Judas decides to hand Jesus over to the Jewish leaders. Again Mark seems to be concerned mainly with making his point, that is, that Barrabas is an insurrectionist, and that Judas betrays Jesus.

with conveying his message more than with writing a consistent account of Jesus' life all indicate that to the Markan evangelist writing a biography of Jesus was not an aim in itself, but a means of attaining his objective. Therefore, Mark's Gospel is best characterized as an apologetic writing, a kind of pamphlet in biographical form.

CONCLUSIONS

Mark's Gospel is a reaction to the threat of persecution that menaces the Galilean Christians in the period just after the Jewish Revolt. It is above all an apologetic writing, directed to the endangered Christians themselves and meant to confirm them in their faithfulness to the Christian message, so that they will be strong enough to endure the hardships they are experiencing.

The evangelist's decision to embody his message in a story about Jesus' life is understandable if one takes into account that the heart of the problem Mark has to deal with lies in Jesus' identity and death. By using the biographical form, Mark is able to argue his case by means of an illustrative, visualizing presentation, and thus to give his arguments more cogency.

The biographical form of Mark's Gospel forces the conclusion that, of all the genres of Graeco-Roman literature, the Gospel has most in common with that of ancient biography. This conclusion, however, does not lead to a better understanding of the Gospel, since classifying the Gospel as a biography fails to do justice to the Gospel's main purpose, nor is it very helpful in interpreting dominant elements or motifs in Mark's Gospel.

In fact, the biographical form of Mark's Gospel is secondary to its overall apologetic purpose. To the Markan evangelist, writing a biography of Jesus was not an aim in itself. The Gospel's form was mainly a vehicle to convey the evangelist's apologetic message. Therefore, Mark's Gospel is best characterized not as a biography of Jesus, but as an apologetic writing in biographical form.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present study was to establish what, a few decades after Jesus' death, may have motivated the Markan evangelist to write a story about Jesus' ministry, and what Mark may have hoped to achieve by writing his Gospel. The results of this study may be summed up in the following conclusions.

1. Mark's Gospel was probably written for a Christian audience in Galilee some time after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 AD. The fact that Mark's readers are supposed to share the evangelist's knowledge about certain details of Galilean geography and to be acquainted with certain persons mentioned in the Gospel indicates that in writing his Gospel the evangelist had in mind a readership that lived at the same time and in the same area as he did. This justifies the conclusion that Mark's Gospel was written for a Galilean Christian readership that lived in the seventies of the first century AD.

2. According to the Markan evangelist, the Galilean Christian community he addresses in his Gospel is living under the threat of persecutions by leading Jews. The fact that the Christians are the followers of someone who is called Christ and who has died by crucifixion, might, in Mark's perception, lead outsiders to believe that the Markan Christian community is in fact a subversive Jewish movement that does not accept Roman rule in Palestine. Especially in the period after the Jewish revolt, such a suspicion of subversiveness might lead the Romans to intervene violently against the Christians; this would harm not only them, but also other people in the area, especially the Jewish elite. Mark probably knows that the Jewish leaders generally try to avert such Roman intervention by persecuting troublemakers and, when necessary, handing them over to the Roman authorities. Thus the evangelist fears that the Christian confession of the crucified Jesus as Christ may cause the Jewish leaders to persecute the Markan Christians and deliver them up to the Romans as anti-Roman rebels.

3. The circumstances of Mark's readers as the evangelist perceived them must have played an important part in his decision to write his Gospel. In fact, Mark's depiction of Jesus' ministry and death seems to be meant mainly to eliminate the political connotations of the title 'Christ' and Jesus' crucifixion. In his Gospel Mark stresses that Jesus was not an anti-Roman rebel who intended to assume political power over an earthly Israel. Mark presents Jesus as God's final envoy, who proclaims the imminence of God's kingdom, and must die and rise again in order to return at the definitive breakthrough of God's reign to gather his faithful, to whom God will accord eternal life. By means of his story about Jesus, Mark intends to strengthen and encourage his Christian readers to resist the pressure caused by the persecutions, and to warn them not to falter in their faith.

4. Mark's choice to embody his message in an account of Jesus' ministry and death is probably to a large extent determined by the fact that the heart of the problem he wishes to address concerns Jesus' identity as the Christ and his crucifixion. A story about Jesus enabled the evangelist to treat his main issues with a maximum of persuasiveness. The Gospel's form allows us to categorize Mark's Gospel as an ancient biography, but such a categorization is not very illuminating. Mark is not interested in biographical details, the Gospel's structure is dominated by Mark's apologetic intentions, and the evangelist was not concerned with writing a consistent account of Jesus' life. From all this it may be inferred that for the Markan evangelist writing an account of Jesus' life was not an aim in itself, but a means of attaining another goal, that is, to show that Jesus was not an anti-Roman rebel. In presenting this image of Jesus, Mark wanted to confirm his readers in their adherence to the Christian message, and to help them to defend themselves against the charge of causing social unrest and endangering civic order. Therefore, Mark's Gospel can best be characterized as an apologetic tract in biographical form.

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